shiwo komeyama

BLOODY CROSS

4

BLOODY CROSS

4

Shiwo Komeyama

04 contents

14 : The Path to Godhood 003

15 : White, Black, Gray 043

16 : A Chance Encounter 079

17 : Depth of Feeling 117

18 : The Crusade à Trois 153

...FORCE OPEN A PATH TO GOD-HOOD...
...DID YOU SAY?
SEE...
YUP.

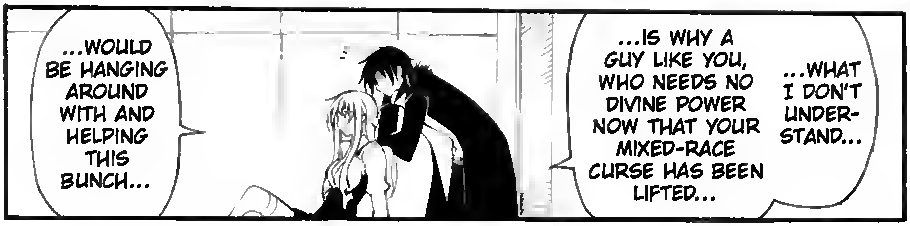
...NONE OF US REALLY HAVE THE TIME OR PATIENCE TO SIT BACK AND WAIT...
...WHEN WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT HOW THE CRUSADE WILL GO...
BA (WHSH)
...OR THE RELICS THAT ARE ITS LITTLE REWARDS ALONG THE WAY.

...ANY-WAY, THAT'S WHY...
...WE NEED YOUR POWER—YOU BEAR THE MARK OF THE BOOK OF DA'AT.
TON (PAT)

WHICH IS WHY WE THOUGHT WE MIGHT LOOK FOR A SHORT-CUT.
IT'S ONLY LOGICAL! ♡

SIGH...
YOU KNOW...

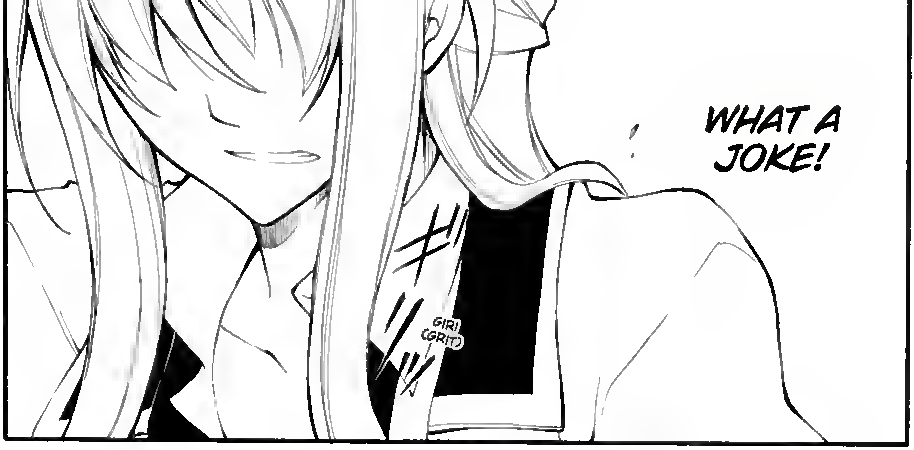
A LIVING SACRI-FICE.


...WHAT I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
...IS WHY A GUY LIKE YOU, WHO NEEDS NO DIVINE POWER NOW THAT YOUR MIXED-RACE CURSE HAS BEEN LIFTED...
...WOULD BE HANGING AROUND WITH AND HELPING THIS BUNCH...

IS IT MON-EY?
.....
...WELL, MONEY'S REAL IMPOR-TANT AND ALL...
GOTTA MAINTAIN THE STANDARD OF LIVING

TCH.
—I THOUGHT I'D HIT THE JACKPOT WHEN I FOUND OUT THIS MARK WAS IN THE BOOK OF DA'AT...

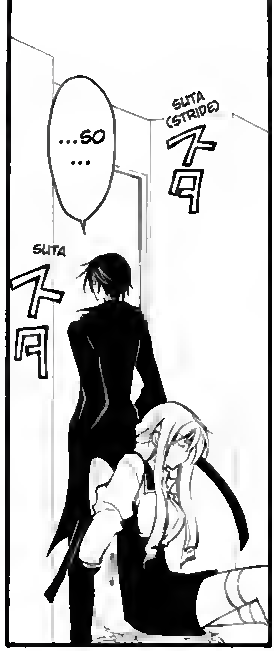
...BUT COULDN'T YOU HAVE...
...GONE WITH SOMETHING LIKE, "WAS HE BLINDED BY THE POWER OF GOD'S RELICS?"
YOU'RE WAY TOO REALISTIC.

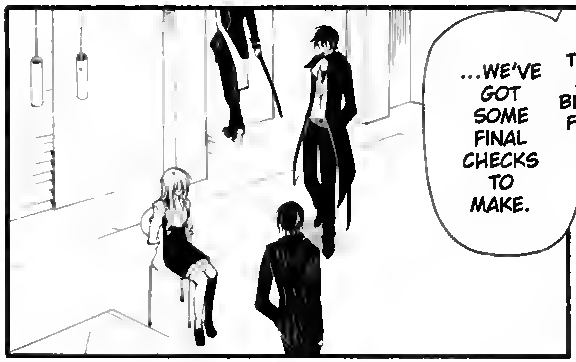


Chapter: 14

The Path to Godhood

GACHA (KACHAK)


...SO ...
SUTA (STRIDE)
SUTA


...WE'VE GOT SOME FINAL CHECKS TO MAKE.

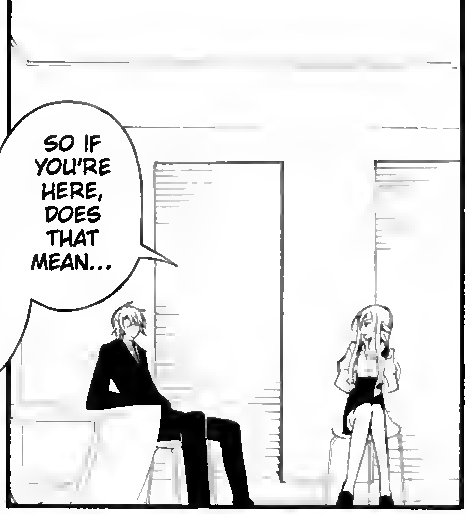
NOW THAT THE MARK'S BEEN CONFIRMED...
?

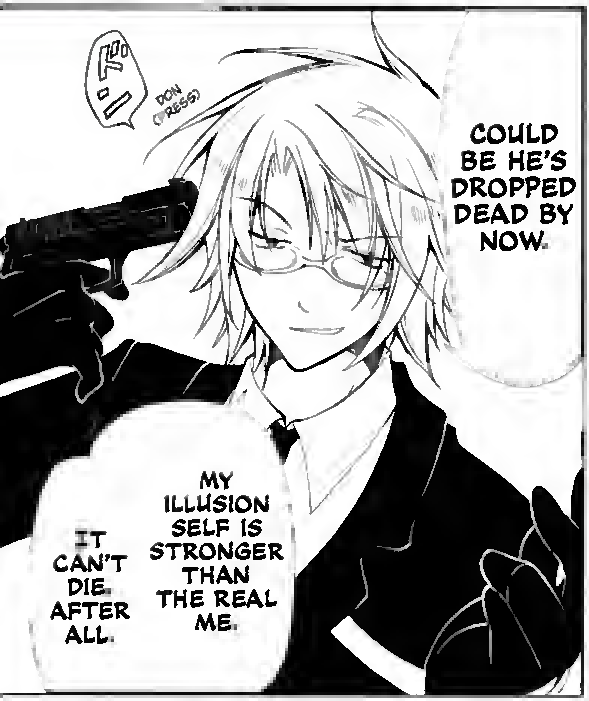
I WANT YOU IN THERE KEEPING AN EYE ON HER.
YOU.
YES, SIR.

BE GOOD TILL WE'RE DONE PREPPING, 'KAY?

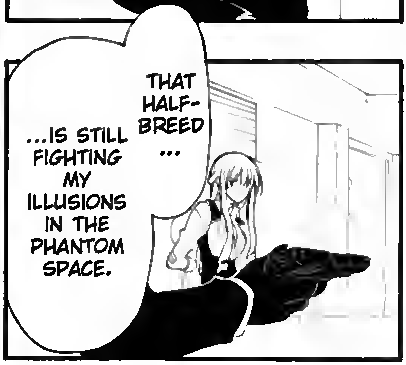
KOTSU (TOK)
KOTSU
KOTSU
PATAN (SHUT)
IF I STAY HERE, I'M GOING TO DIE.
GATA (CLATTER)
BUT I NEED TO GET THESE SPELL AMULETS OFF MY ARMS FIRST...
...OTHERWISE, I CAN'T LOOSEN THE CHAINS OR USE MY BLOOD AND WEAPONS.
...HMM, THIS GUY...
THE ONLY WAY OUT...IS THROUGH THAT DOOR.

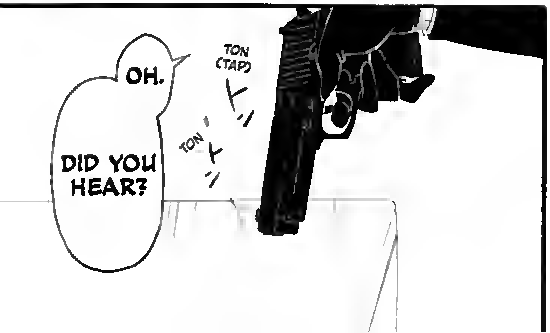
...THE GUY WHO WAS WITH ME IS ON THE LOOSE?


SO IF YOU'RE HERE, DOES THAT MEAN...


DON (PRESS)
COULD BE HE'S DROPPED DEAD BY NOW.
MY ILLUSION SELF IS STRONGER THAN THE REAL ME.
IT CAN'T DIE. AFTER ALL.

.....
DON'T EXPECT ANY HELP FROM HIM.


THAT HALF-BREED ...
...IS STILL FIGHTING MY ILLUSIONS IN THE PHANTOM SPACE.

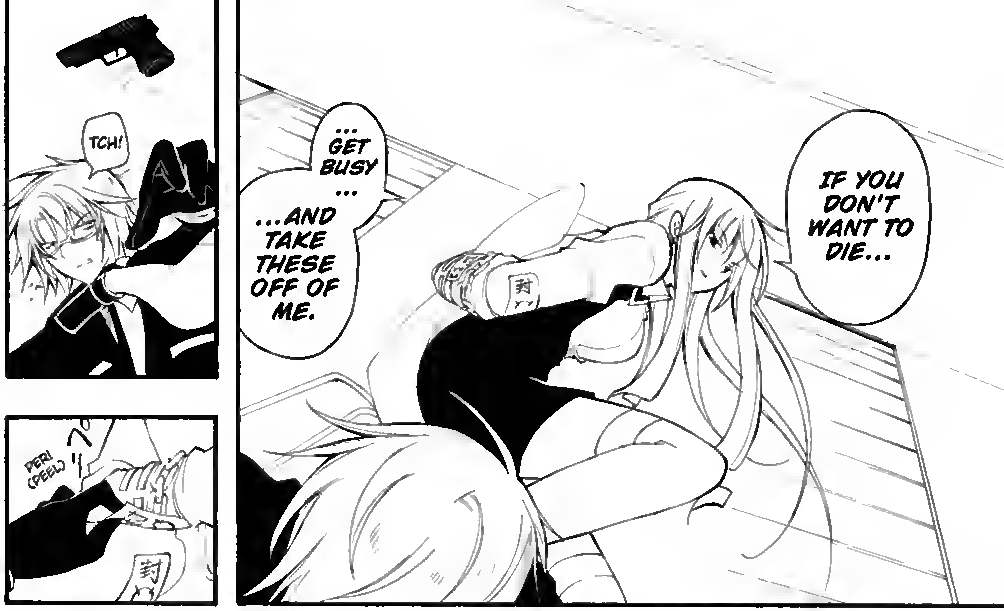

TON (TAP)
TON
OH.
DID YOU HEAR?

.....

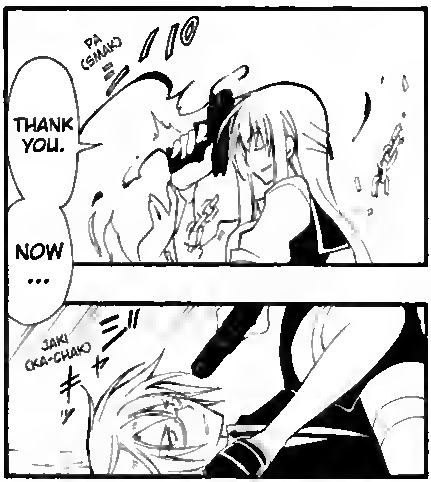
YOUR GOD CANDI-DATE AND HIS DOG.
IT SEEMS THE FALLEN ANGEL'S MINION ELIMINATED THEM A SHORT WHILE AGO.
YOU'RE REALLY IN A STICKY SPOT NOW.
ALL THIS GRIEF OVER THIS FANCY NEW MARK OF YOURS.

SHIGE (STROKE)
SHIGE
14"
14"
...WELL ...
...IT JUST LOOKS LIKE A TATTOO TO ME.
...COULD YOU BACK OFF?

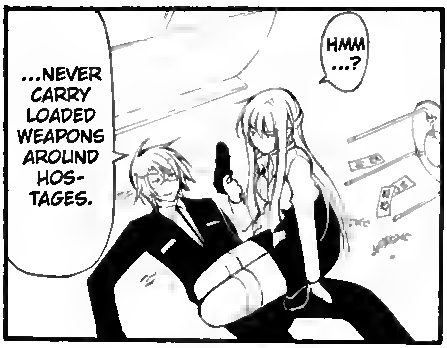
PA (SNAP)
は?
HUH?
... BREATHING DOWN MY CHEST.
YOU'RE ...
SUKO (SWIPE)
スコ
GU (STOMP)
!!
OW!


TCH!
PERI (PEEL)
...GET BUSY...
...AND TAKE THESE OFF OF ME.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE...

KACHI (CLICK)

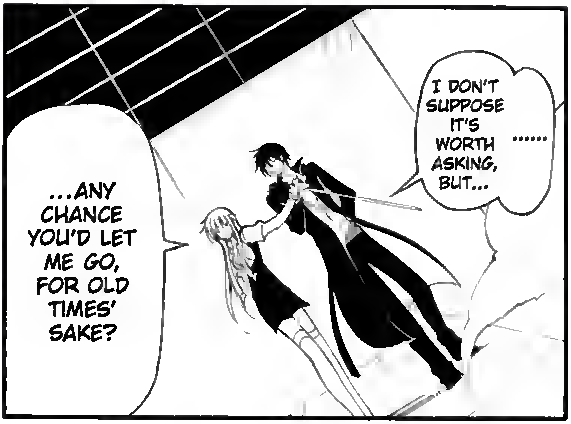

PA (SHAK)
THANK YOU.
NOW...
JAKI (KA-CHAK)

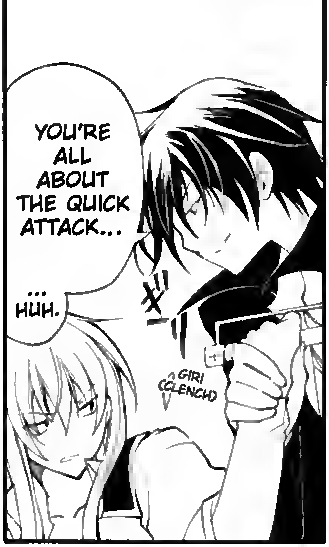
THAT'S ONLY IF YOU'RE CONFIDENT YOU CAN BEAT THEM IN A FIST-FIGHT.
HYUI (WHOOSH)
.....
HMPH.


...NEVER CARRY LOADED WEAPONS AROUND HOS-TAGES.
HMM ...?

TA (TFP)
GO (WHACK)
OH, BUT...!
.....
THE BOOK OF DA'AT IS MY ONE KEY TO RIDDING MYSELF OF THIS PAIN IN THE ASS MARK.
GU (SQUEEZE)
...I MAY NEVER GET A LOOK INSIDE THE BOOK OF DA'AT.
IF I RUN...
BA (FWP)
...I'LL RUN RIGHT INTO HINATA AND THE OTHERS FOR SURE...
BUT IF I TRY FOR IT NOW...

FOUND YOU.
=OM=
TCH!
PASH (GRAB)
BACHI (FLAT)


I DON'T SUPPOSE IT'S WORTH ASKING, BUT...
.....
...ANY CHANCE YOU'D LET ME GO, FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE?


YOU'RE ALL ABOUT THE QUICK ATTACK...
...
HUH.
GIRI
GRIP

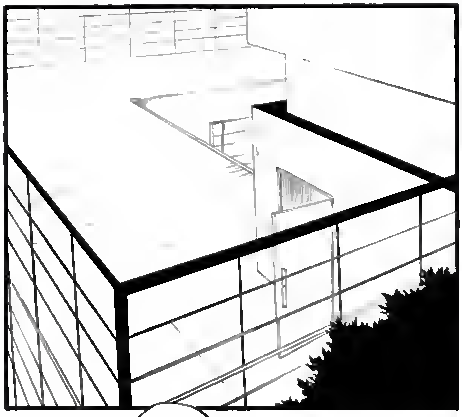
OH?
I'M WILLING TO REVISE MY OPINION.
OF COURSE, IF YOU WON'T, THIS IS IT FOR ME.

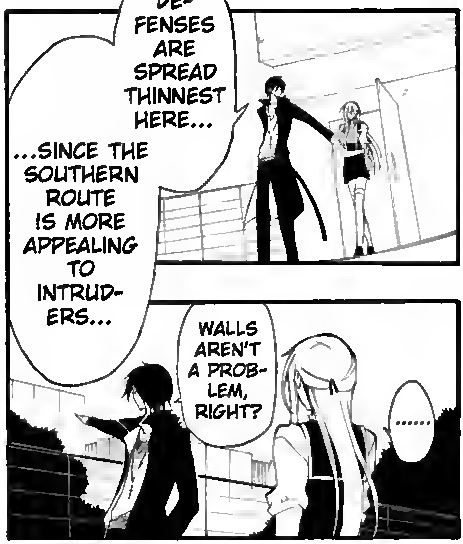
...OLD TIMES' SAKE?
...YOU WERE DISGUSTED WITH ME? DONE WITH ME?
I THOUGHT YOU SAID...

LISTEN ...

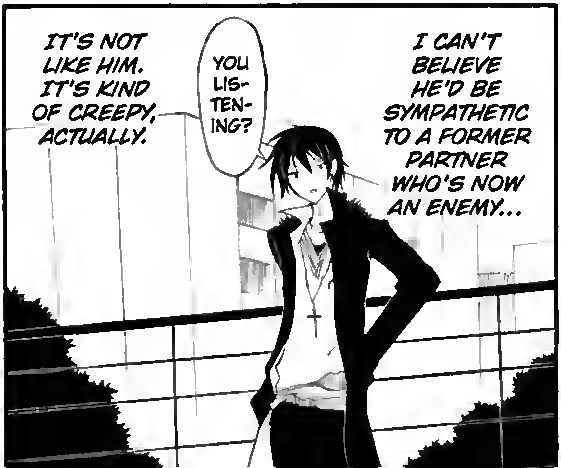
...
DIDN'T I WARN YOU?
...IT'D REALLY BE BETTER FOR YOU TO JUST GIVE UP ON IT.

.....
...
Y'KNOW, THAT BOOK ...
—...
.....



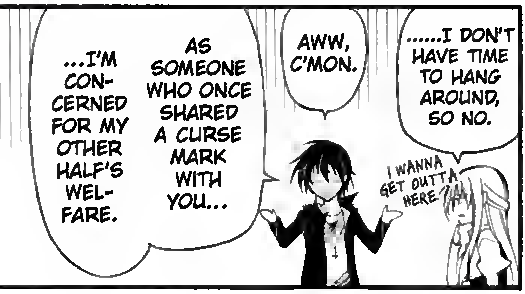

DE-FENSES ARE SPREAD THINNEST HERE...
...SINCE THE SOUTHERN ROUTE IS MORE APPEALING TO INTRUD-ERS...
WALLS AREN'T A PROB-LEM, RIGHT?
.....

...I'LL TELL YOU HOW TO GET OUT.


IT'S NOT LIKE HIM. IT'S KIND OF CREEPY, ACTUALLY.
YOU LIS-TEN-ING?
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D BE SYMPATHETIC TO A FORMER PARTNER WHO'S NOW AN ENEMY...

WHAT IS THIS?
HE ACTUALLY BROUGHT ME TO AN EXIT.
I DON'T GET IT.

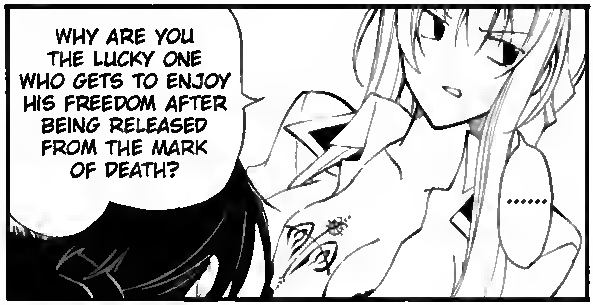
AND YET, I DON'T SENSE THAT HE'S LYING...
OH, RIGHT.
BEFORE YOU GO...
SU (SSH)


.....I DON'T HAVE TIME TO HANG AROUND, SO NO.
AWW, C'MON.
I WANNA GET OUTTA HERE
AS SOMEONE WHO ONCE SHARED A CURSE MARK WITH YOU...
...I'M CONCERNED FOR MY OTHER HALF'S WELFARE.

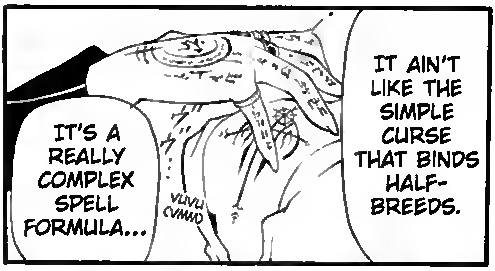
...MIND SHOWING ME THAT MARK?
... HUH ...?

HMM, LET'S SEE ...
ZUI (LOOM)

WHAT?
WHINING ALREADY?
THAT'S NOT CUTE AT ALL.

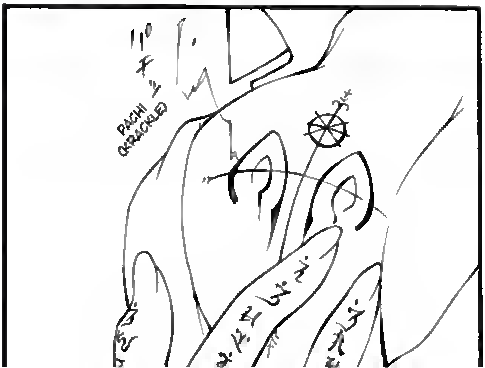

WHY ARE YOU THE LUCKY ONE WHO GETS TO ENJOY HIS FREEDOM AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM THE MARK OF DEATH?
.....

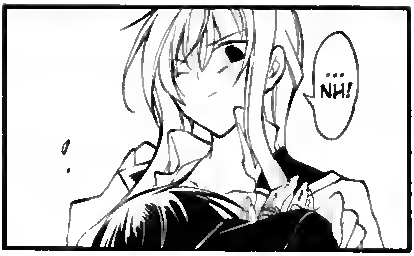
BY THE WAY, A WORD OF ADVICE...
...THIS MARK...
...IT'S NOT GOING TO GO AWAY AS EASILY AS YOU THINK.

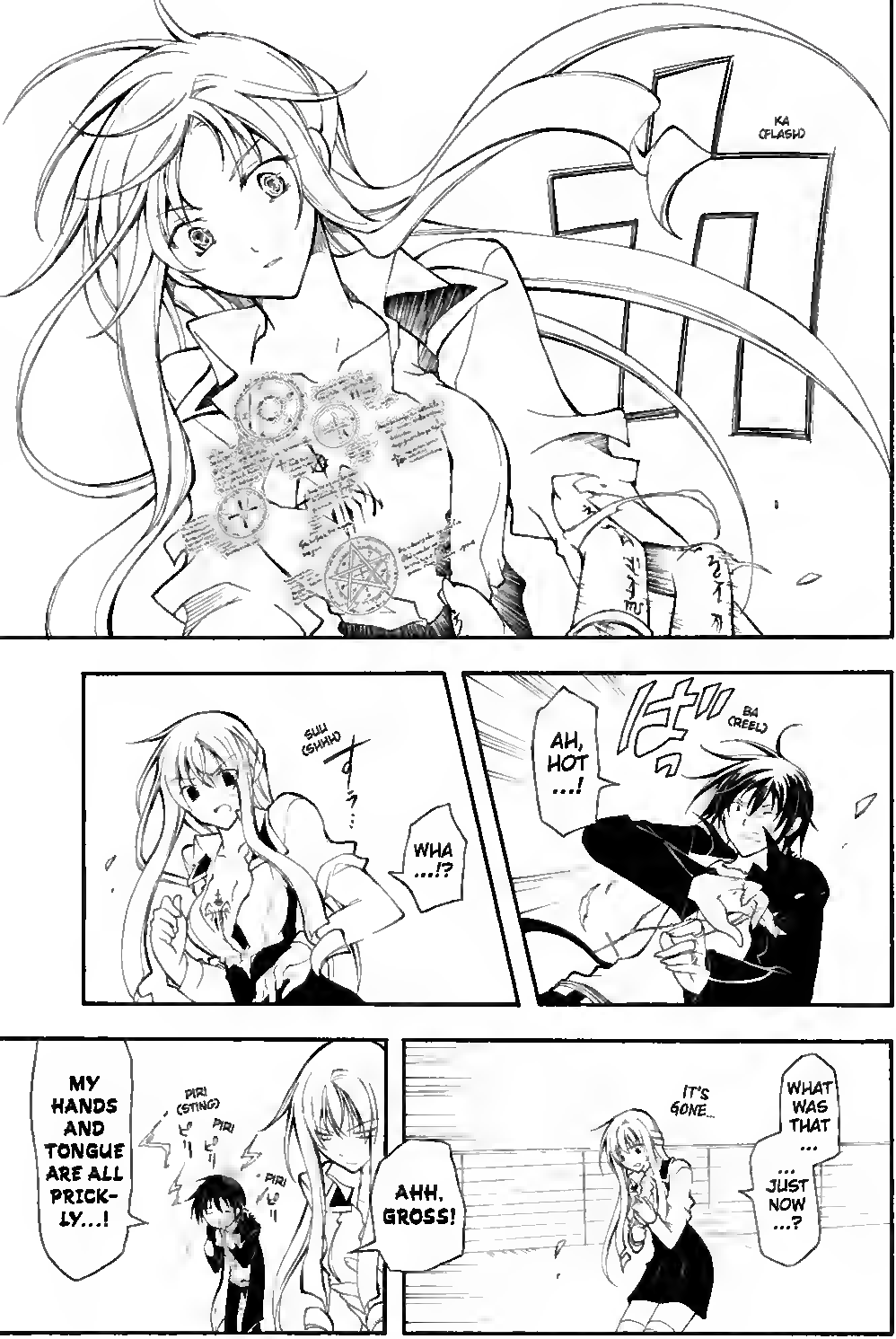

IT AIN'T LIKE THE SIMPLE CURSE THAT BINDS HALF-BREEDS.
IT'S A REALLY COMPLEX SPELL FORMULA...

.....
I DIDN'T SAY YOU COULD TOUCH IT.
HOW ELSE CAN I STUDY IT?

I FEEL THERE'S SOME-THING DEEPER TOO...

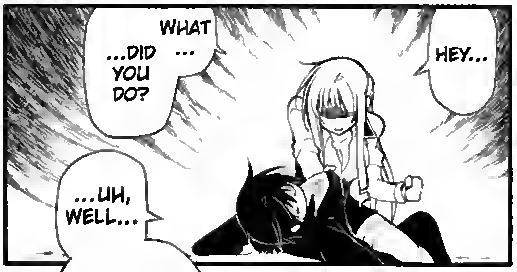

PACHI (CRACKLE)


...NH!

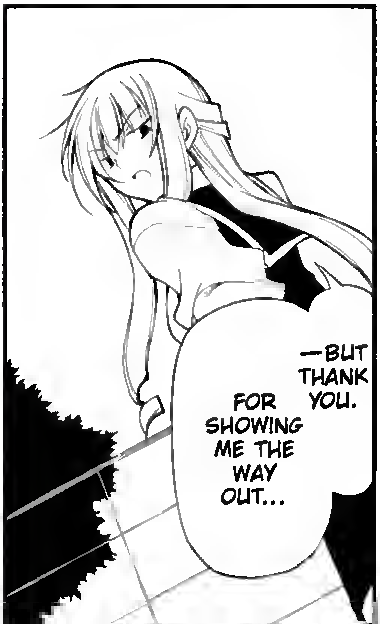

KA (FLASH)
SUU (SHHH)
WHA ...!?
AH, HOT ...!
BA (REEL)
PIRI (STING)
PIRI
PIRI
MY HANDS AND TONGUE ARE ALL PRICK-LY...!
AHH, GROSS!
IT'S GONE...
WHAT WAS THAT ... ... JUST NOW ...?

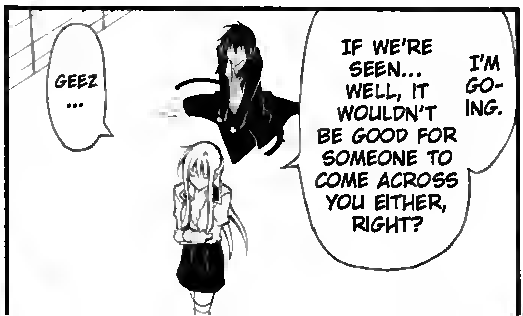
GA
(GRAB)

GO
(WHAM)


HEY...
WHAT ...DID YOU DO?
...UH, WELL...

...I TRIED TO GO IN, AND IT REPELLED ME...
SO, UM, Y'KNOW...
...THAT MARK'S REEEALLY INTRIGUING... I'D SURE LIKE TO TOUCH, ER, INVESTIGATE SOME MORE.
PEN
(SMAK)


—BUT THANK YOU. FOR SHOWING ME THE WAY OUT...


GEEZ ...
IF WE'RE SEEN... WELL, IT WOULDN'T BE GOOD FOR SOMEONE TO COME ACROSS YOU EITHER, RIGHT?
I'M GO-ING.

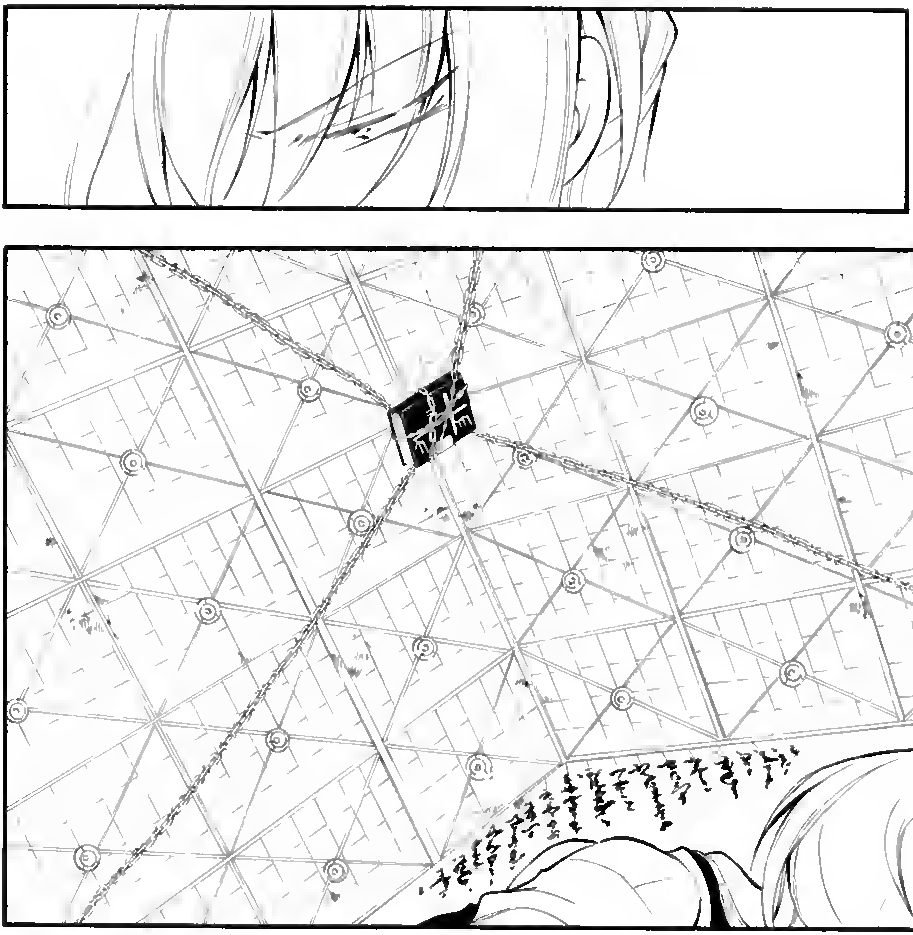
...
WHA
...?

SO SLEEPY...
WHA
...?

GATA (GLUMP)
...NH!

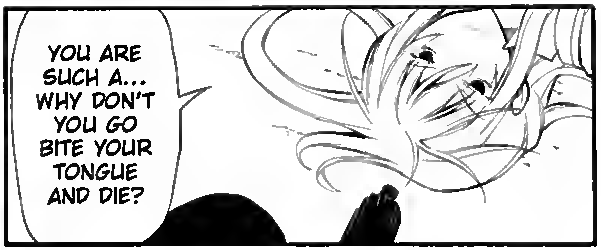
HE PUT A SPELL ON ME TO...
DAMMIT...

...KNOCK...
ME...OUT...

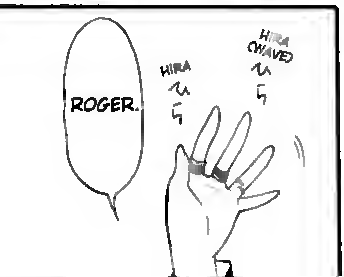

ギチ…
GICHI
CHUCHO
HUH
...?
...
MORN-
IN'.

SLEEP WELL?

HEY.
CAN I KILL HER YET?

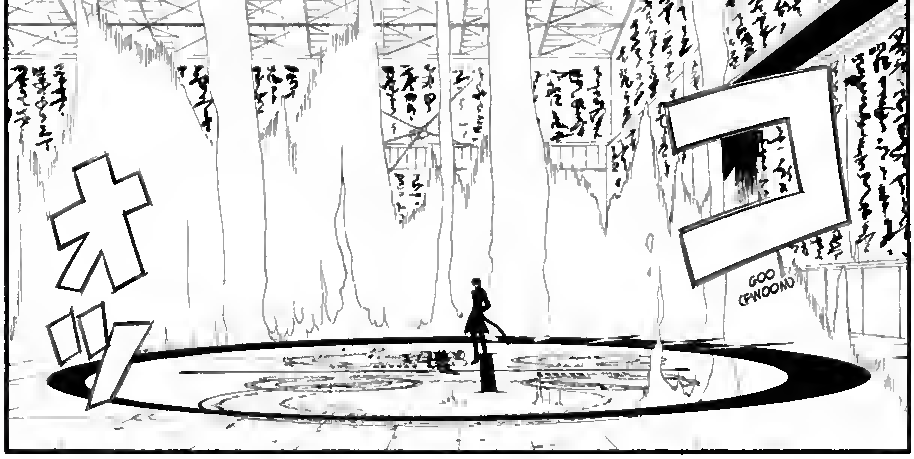

YOU ARE SUCH A... WHY DON'T YOU GO BITE YOUR TONGUE AND DIE?

NOT WHEN I'VE JUST CAPTURED MY RUNAWAY SACRIFICE.
AH-HA-HA. NO, THANKS.


ROGER.
HIRA
HIRA
CHAVED

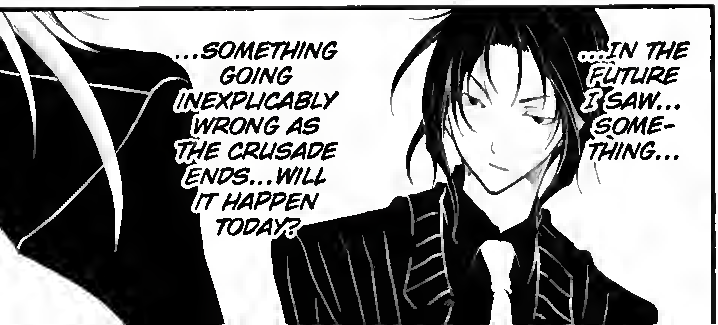
...IS A LARGE QUANTITY OF BLOOD FOR THE PERIM-ETER TO ABSORB.
...WHAT'S NEEDED AT THIS STAGE...

AH ...!
GOPU (BLUSH)
DON (BANG)
YOU THINK THAT'S ENOUGH?
DORO (BLEEEED)
DON
DON
DON
JURU
JURU
JURU (SHLRP)


GOO (FWOOM)

AND NOW...
...A NEW GOD SHALL BE BORN!

...DIVINE POWER WRUNG FROM A WHOLLY DEFILED PROPHETIC BOOK...
...AND BLOOD COMPATIBLE WITH IT.
WE'VE FAKED THE DETAILS OF THE CRUSADE'S END-GAME...
...USING A NUMBER OF MAGICAL TOOLS AND SPELLS AT OUR DISPOSAL.

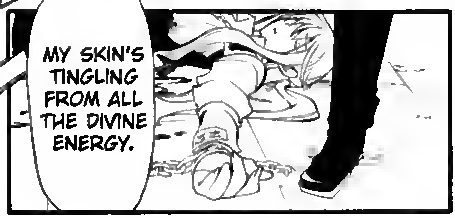

...IN THE FUTURE I SAW... SOMETHING...
...SOMETHING GOING INEXPLICABLY WRONG AS THE CRUSADE ENDS...WILL IT HAPPEN TODAY?

THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO IT ARE ALMOST IDENTI-CAL...
GOGO (RRRUMBLE)
THE FIRST PILLAR IS ABOUT TO APPEAR.
GOGO

NI (SMIRK)
NEXT COMES TWO THROUGH SEVEN.

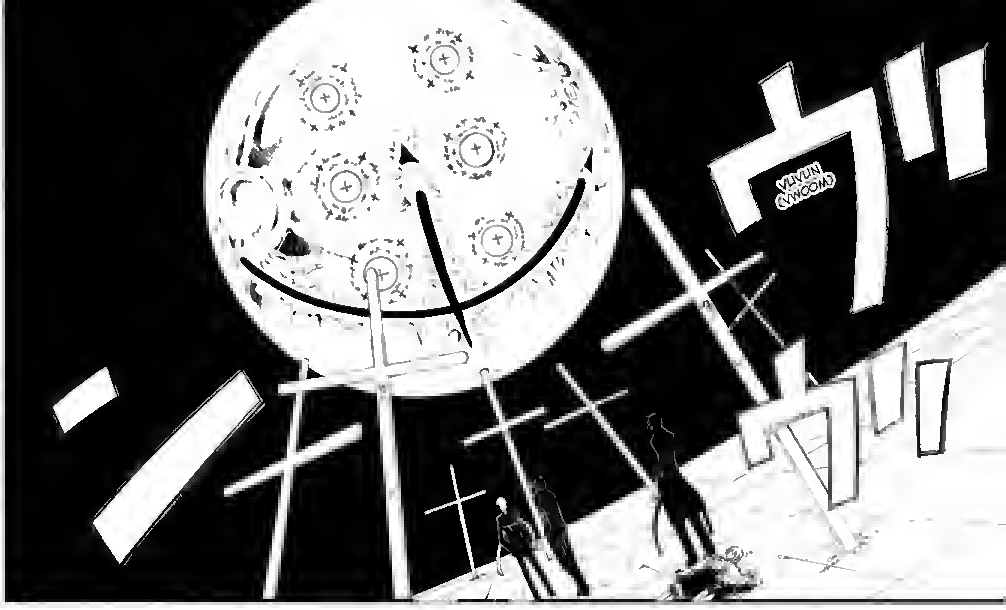
ZUDON
ZUDON

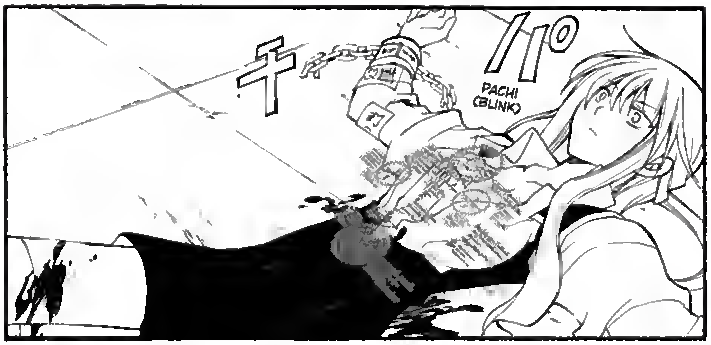
ZUDON
ZUDON

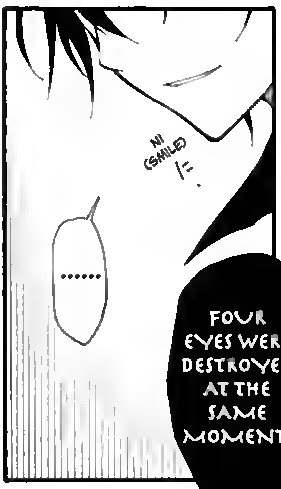

... WOW.
MY SKIN'S TINGLING FROM ALL THE DIVINE ENERGY.

ZUDON (SHOONK)

DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN (BADUM)
ZU (RUMBL)
ZU
ZU
ZU
THE FINAL PILLAR.
ZUDON
...ALL IS IN PLACE FOR ME TO BECOME GOD.
...LEAD ME FORTH!
O FULL MOON...





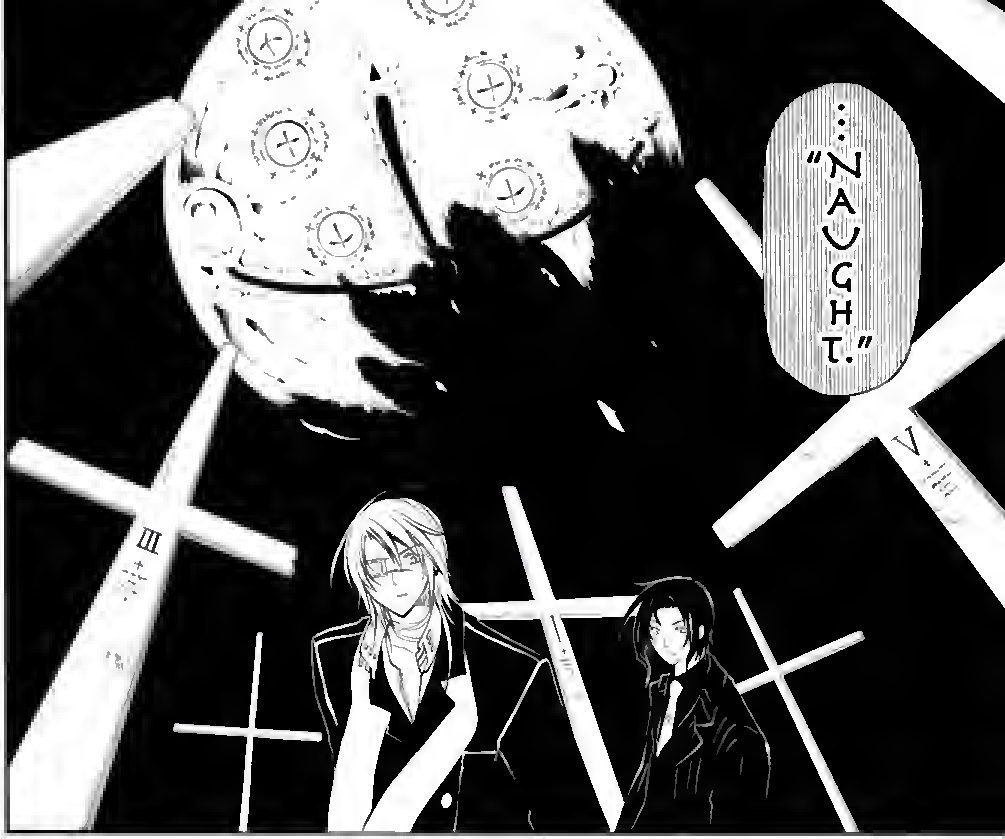


...GOD CURSED THE FIRST MOUNTAIN AND CRUSHED IT IN HIS FIST.

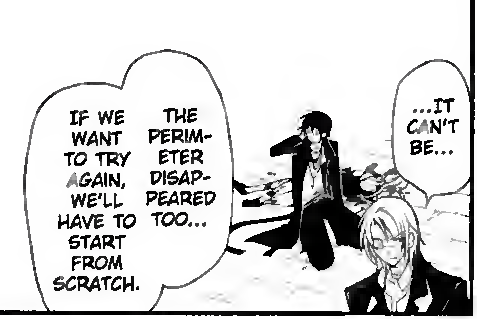
FOUR EYES WERE DESTROYED AT THE SAME MOMENT.

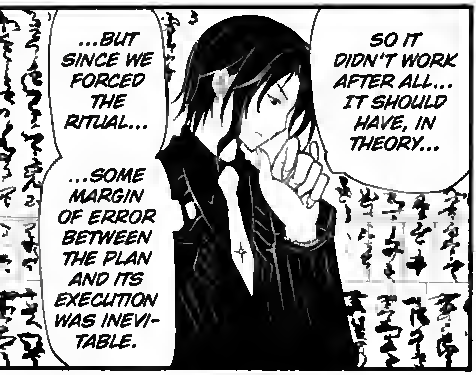
ON THE THIRD DAY, THE TASTE OF FLESH, OF A BEAST RECENTLY SLAUGHTERED.

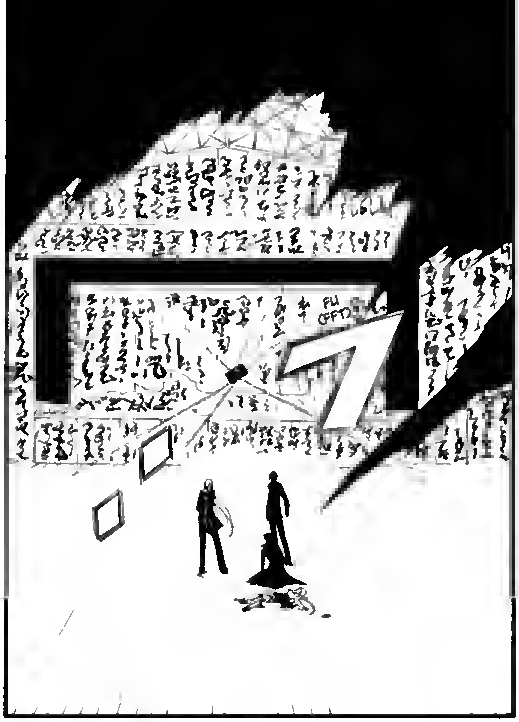
THE SACRIFICE SEEMS TO BE RESISTING!
...HEY!
HUH?
IT'S STOPPED PARTWAY THROUGH...
...?
THE FIVE PEOPLE...
...BEGIN TO DESPISE THE SIX PEOPLE.
WHAT?
...ON THE FINAL NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH WEEK, THERE SHALL BE...
AND...


"...NAUGHT."

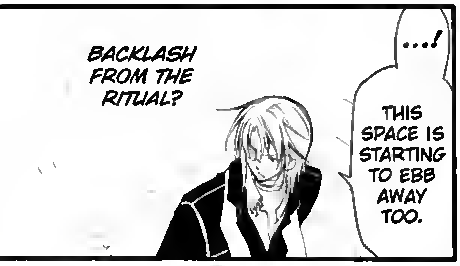
...!!?
THE FULL MOON...
IT'S GONE!
RAA GWAOOO
ガァ
ロロア

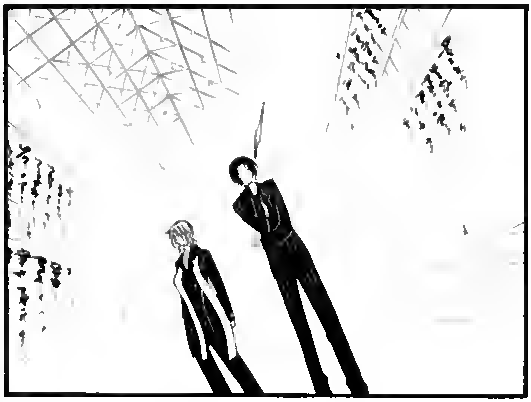

...IT CAN'T BE...
THE PERIMETER DISAPPEARED TOO...
IF WE WANT TO TRY AGAIN, WE'LL HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH.

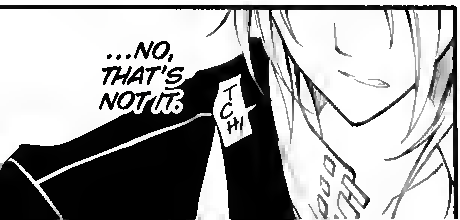

SO IT DIDN'T WORK AFTER ALL... IT SHOULD HAVE, IN THEORY...
...BUT SINCE WE FORCED THE RITUAL...
...SOME MARGIN OF ERROR BETWEEN THE PLAN AND ITS EXECUTION WAS INEVITABLE.


FU OFF?

AND YET, THIS OUTCOME IS BAFFLING...
WE TOOK SUCH CARE IN OUR PREPARATIONS. FOR IT TO FAIL AT SUCH AN EARLY STAGE...
I SUPPOSE THE GODS MUST FROWN STRONGLY UPON DISHONESTY...

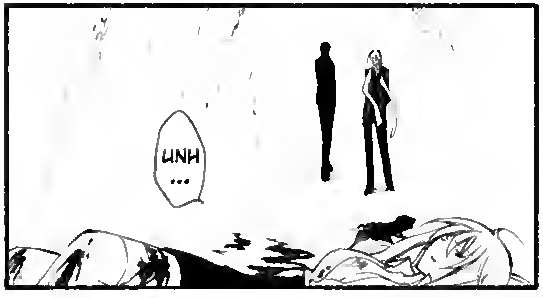

...!
THIS SPACE IS STARTING TO EBB AWAY TOO.
BACKLASH FROM THE RITUAL?




...NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
TCHI

THAT MARK...
I THOUGHT IT WAS MERELY SUPERFICIAL, BUT...
SUU (SHFF)

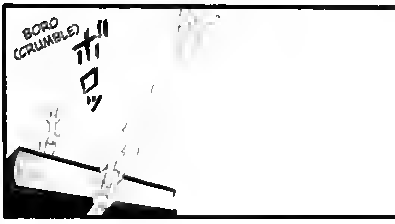
THE SACRIFICE'S RESISTANCE DIDN'T STOP AT NULLIFYING THE RITUAL...
...IT'S TRYING TO REDUCE THIS ENTIRE AREA TO NOTHINGNESS AS WELL.

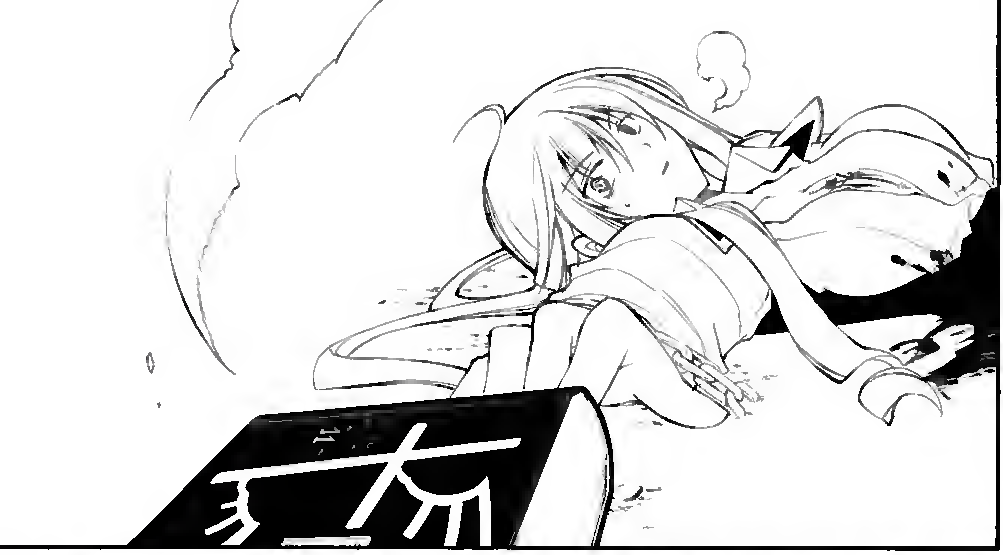

UNH...

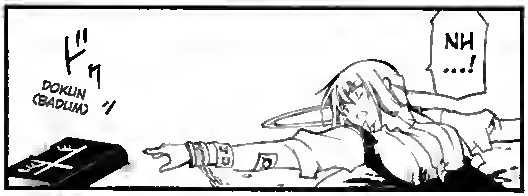
SHUUUU (FSHHH)

ZUGO (BOOM)
!!

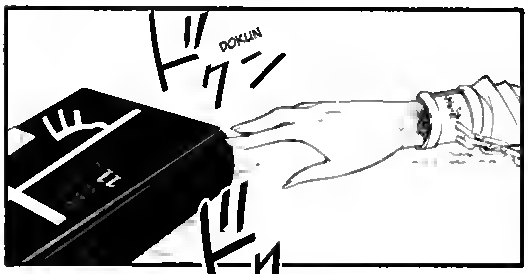
AH!
ZUKI (THROB)
HFF!
HAAH...


BORO (CRUMBLE)

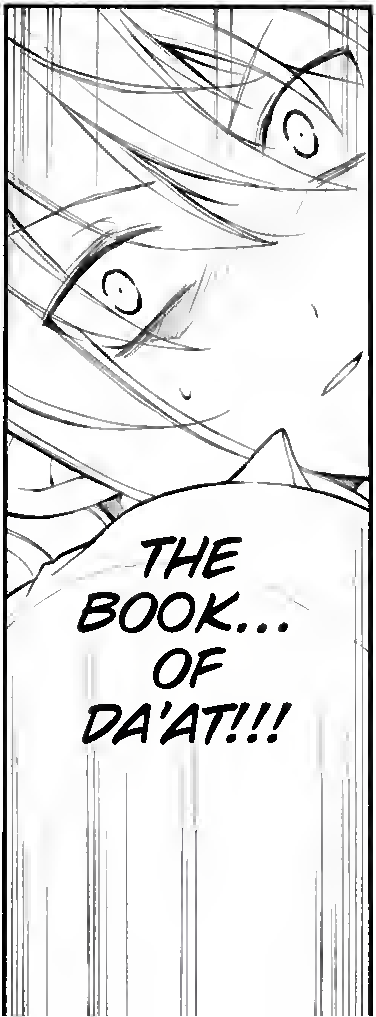



NH ...!
DOKUN (BADUM)

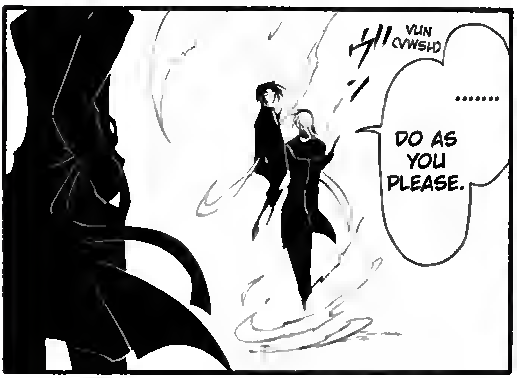
DOKUN
DOKUN
GUGU (STRAIN)


DOKUN

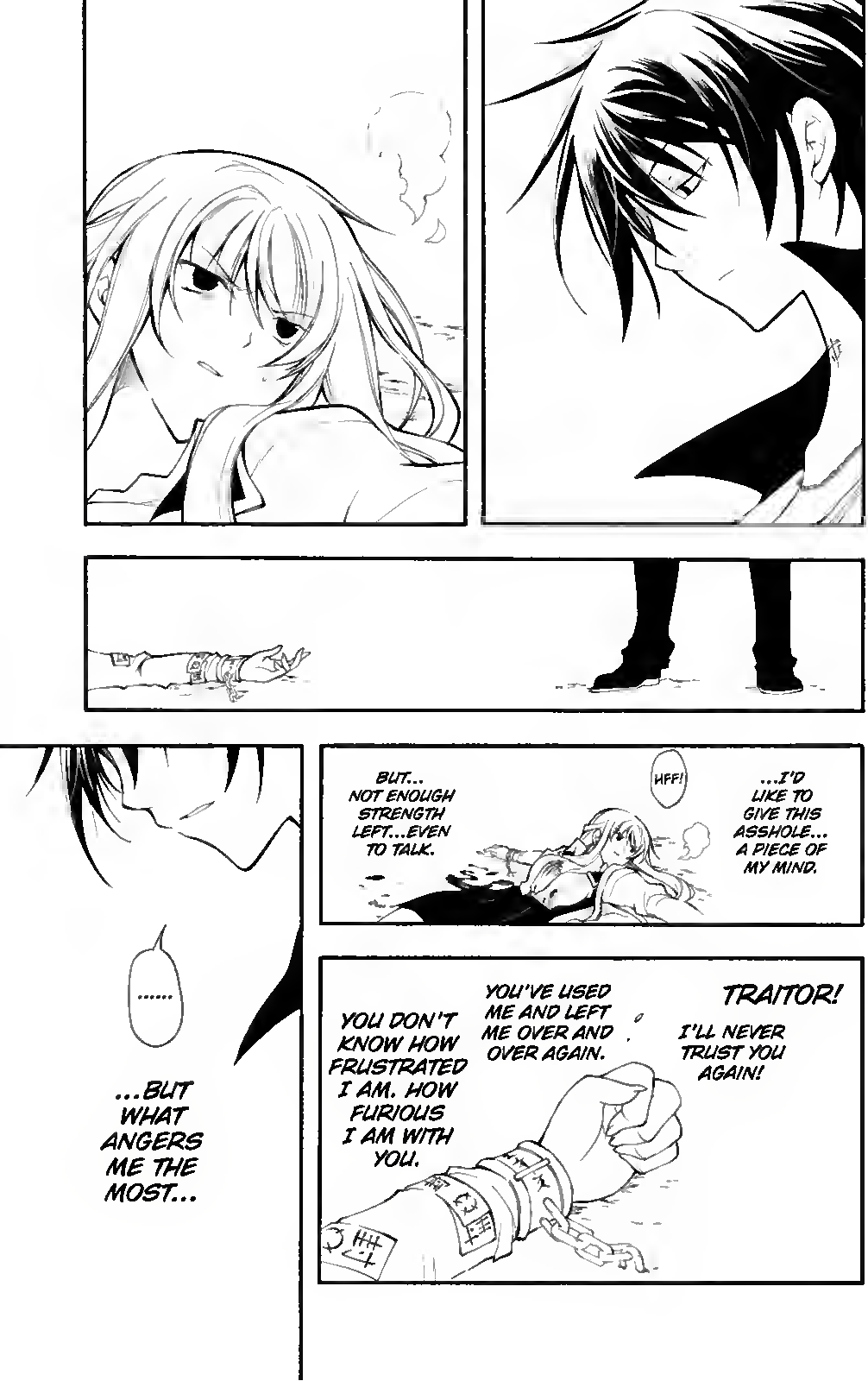
DOKUN
SU (SHAP)


THE BOOK... OF DA'AT!!!

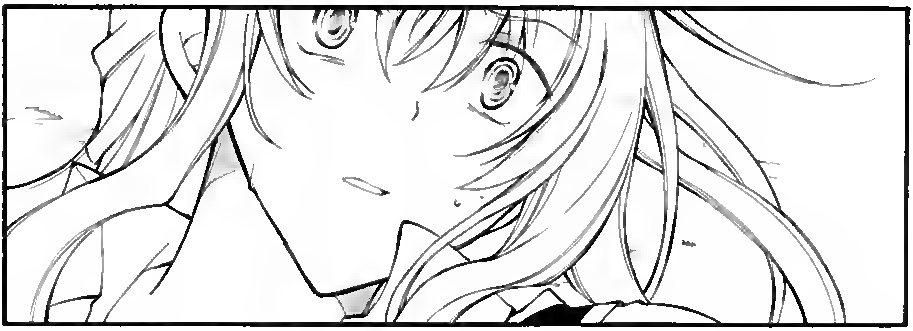
WHAT ABOUT HER?


YUN CVWSHD
.....
DO AS YOU PLEASE.

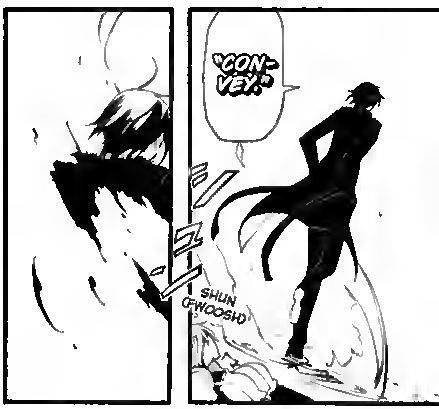
...THIS SPACE WILL SOON BE NO MORE.
LET'S GO.

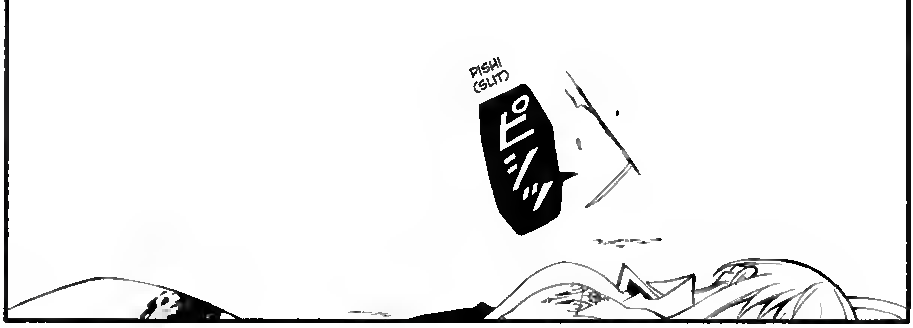

BUT... NOT ENOUGH STRENGTH LEFT...EVEN TO TALK.
HFF!
...I'D LIKE TO GIVE THIS ASSHOLE... A PIECE OF MY MIND.
.....
...BUT WHAT ANGERS ME THE MOST...
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW FRUSTRATED I AM. HOW FURIOUS I AM WITH YOU.
YOU'VE USED ME AND LEFT ME OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
TRAITOR!
I'LL NEVER TRUST YOU AGAIN!

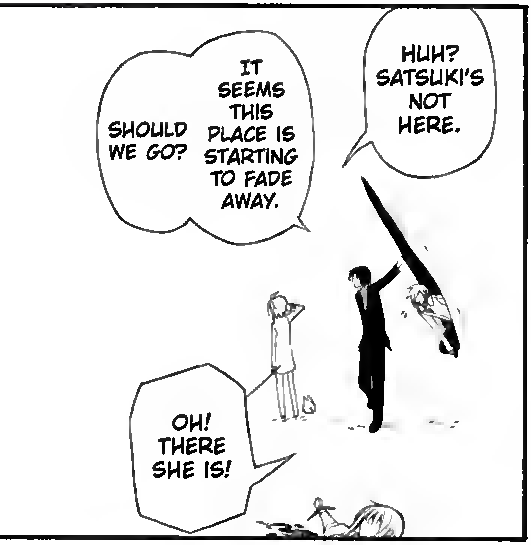
WATCH WHERE YOU GO STICKING YOUR NOSE, 'KAY?



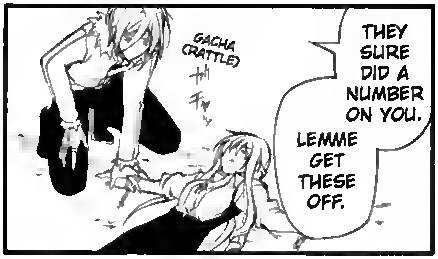
HUH ...?


CON-VEX.
SHUN GWOOSH

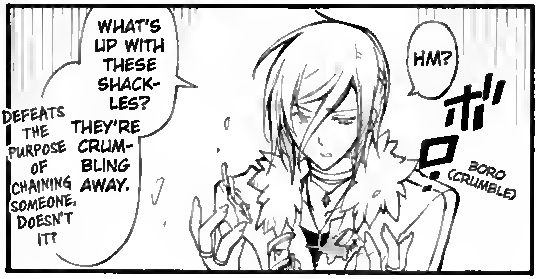

PISH! (SLIT)


HUH? SATSUKI'S NOT HERE.
IT SEEMS THIS PLACE IS STARTING TO FADE AWAY. SHOULD WE GO?
OH! THERE SHE IS!

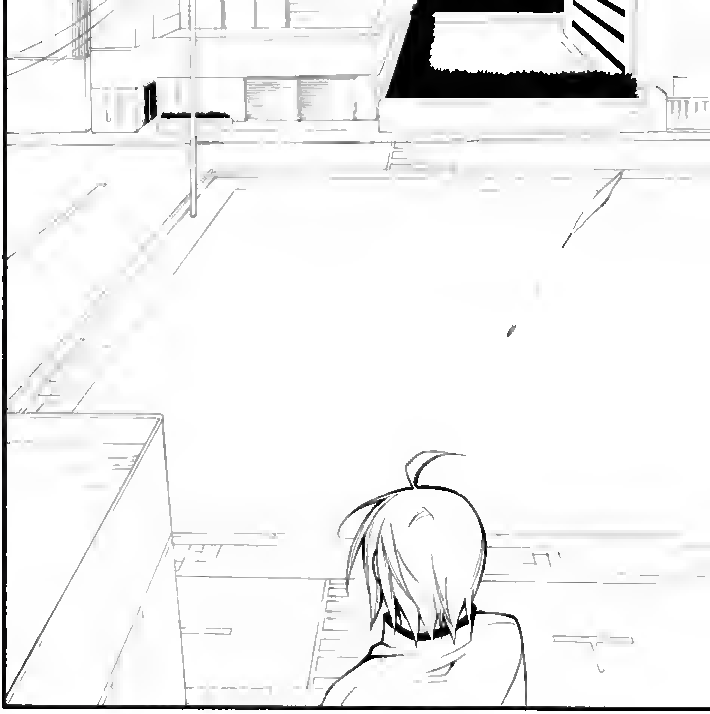
ALL RIGHT! AN EXIT!!
GOOD JOB, PIG!!
BA (LEAP)
OINK!


GACHA (RATTLE)
THEY SURE DID A NUMBER ON YOU.
LEMME GET THESE OFF.

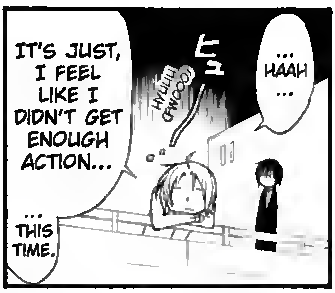
GU (LIFT)
...WORKS FOR ME, THOUGH.

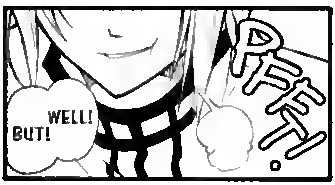

HM?
BORO (CRUMBLE)
WHAT'S UP WITH THESE SHACKLES?
THEY'RE CRUMBLING AWAY.
DEFEATS THE PURPOSE OF CHAINING SOMEONE. DOESN'T IT?

...THE SCHOOL BUILDING, THE GYM...
THEY BOTH VANISHED INTO NOTHINGNESS...



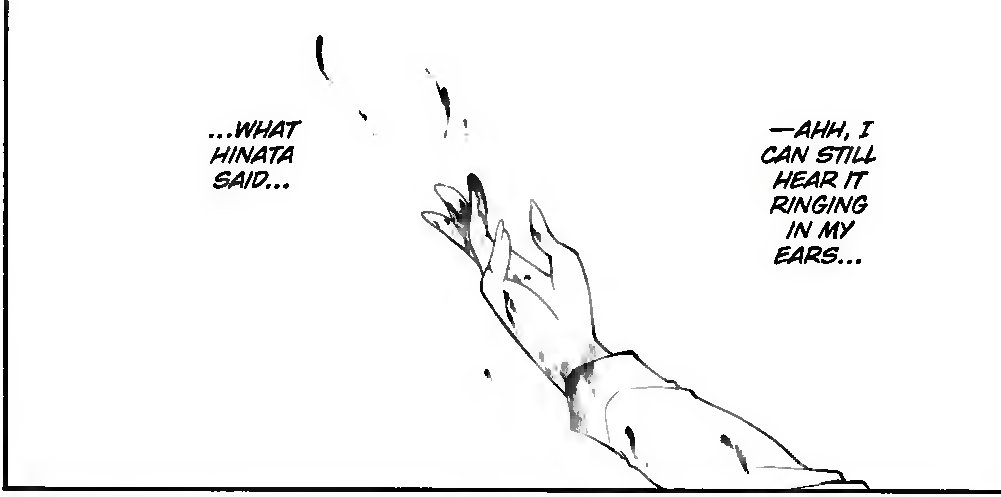
LOOKS LIKE SATSUKI'S PLAN FAILED TOO, SO NYAH-NYAH!
HEE! HEE! HEE! HEE!
AND WASN'T THAT LITTLE KITTY CARRYING ON ABOUT HOW HE WAS GONNA ANNIHILATE ME?
PFF! HA!


...HAAH...
ヒュ
GOOMD
IT'S JUST, I FEEL LIKE I DIDN'T GET ENOUGH ACTION...
...THIS TIME.


PFF!
WELL! BUT!

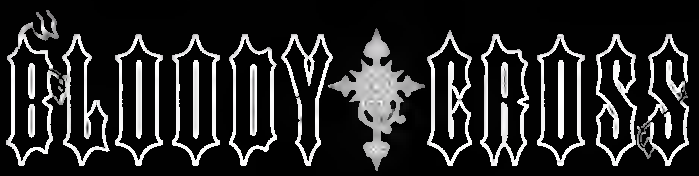
...TO ENSURE THAT THE CRUSADE DOESN'T COME TO AN END.
BUT IT SEEMS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT YOU'RE ONLY BEING ALLOWED TO LIVE...
BEING IN PRIME CONDITION DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
AHHH, WHAT A RIOT.
HAW-HAW-HAW! HE CERTAINLY DIDN'T FOLLOW THROUGH!

THAT DAMN FALLEN ANGEL.
MAKING A MESS OUT OF MY BRIDE...
ANY-WAY...
...WE NEED TO SEE TO THESE INJU-RIES.
THOUGH I SHOULD PROBABLY BE LOOK-ING AT CEMETERY PLOTS TOO.
JAPANESE-OR WESTERN-STYLE? WHICH IS CLASSIER ...?
...IS MY LACK OF POWER.
WHAT FRUSTRATES ME MOST...
I COULDN'T GRAB THE BOOK OF DA'AT, COULDN'T PUT UP A FIGHT...
ZURI (SLIDE)
TSUKI-MIYA?
...I JUST... FEEL SO PITIFUL...AND MISERABLE.



IT'S REALLY, REALLY...

...ANNOYING...


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

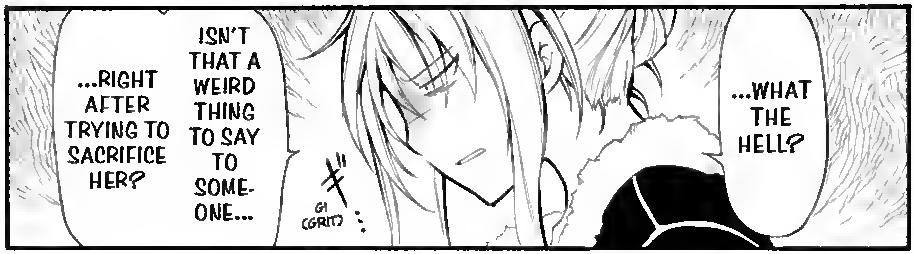
— ...
WATCH WHERE YOU GO STICKING YOUR NOSE, 'KAY?
.....
WHAT...
...WAS THAT ...?

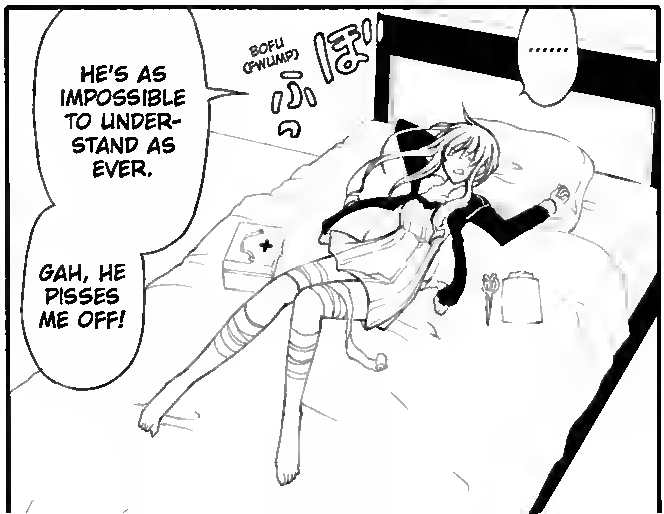
Chapter 15
White, Black, Gray

Chapter 15
White, Black, Gray

BLOODY CROSS

—...
"WATCH WHERE YOU GO STICKING YOUR NOSE"...?


...WHAT THE HELL?
GI (GRIT)
ISN'T THAT A WEIRD THING TO SAY TO SOME-ONE...
...RIGHT AFTER TRYING TO SACRIFICE HER?


.....
BOFU (PFWUMP)
HE'S AS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDER-STAND AS EVER.
GAH, HE PISSES ME OFF!

SACRI-FICE!
I'LL HELP YOU.
HEH HEH HEH
BLACK
WHITE
IT'S LIKE...
...HE'S GOT TWO TYPES OF RESPONSES, WHITE AND BLACK.

...WALKED AWAY COLDLY AND WITHOUT A WORD.
HE COULD HAVE...

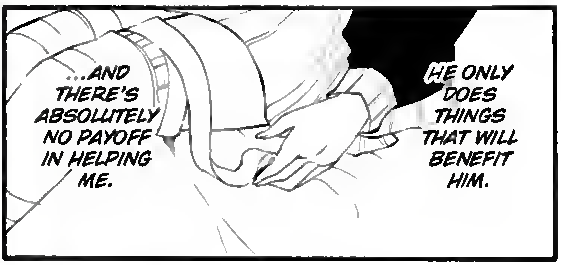
WELL...
...I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE SINCE I WASN'T THERE, BUT THAT'S WHAT IT FELT LIKE.
.....THE PUREBLOOD SAID HE THINKS THE RITUAL WAS INTERRUPTED DUE TO SOME SORT OF RESISTANCE REACTION.

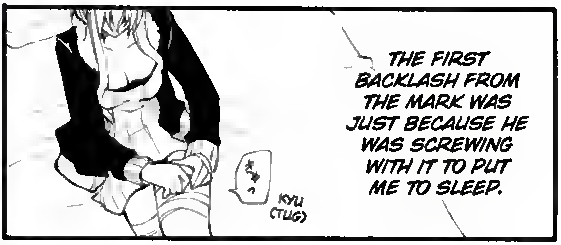
GYU (CLENCH)

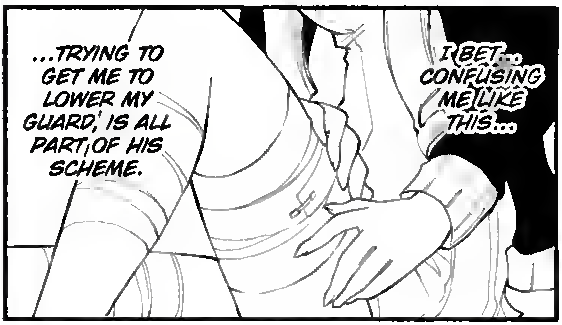
TSU (POINT)
AND THE SOURCE OF THE RESIS-TANCE...

...THAT REMINDS ME...
むく
MUKU (RISE)
.....
!!!
THE MARK FLARED UP AT HINATA TOO...
...THAT TIME HE TRIED TO PROBE IT.
COULD IT BE THAT HE INSERTED SOMETHING...
...THAT WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE RITUAL... INTO THE MARK...?
THEN WHATEVER KNOCKED ME OUT WAS INSERTED WITH IT...
...OR WAS A SIDE EFFECT?
WHICH MEANS... HINATA SAVED ME FROM BEING SACRIFICED.
SO WHITE HINATA IS THE REAL HINATA...
...AND BLACK HINATA IS AN ACT HE'S PUTTING ON OUT OF NECESSITY...?

HINATA IS AN ENEMY.

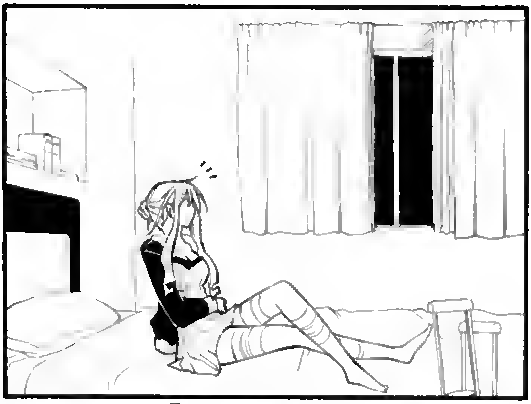




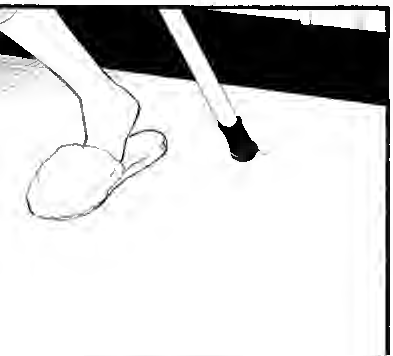


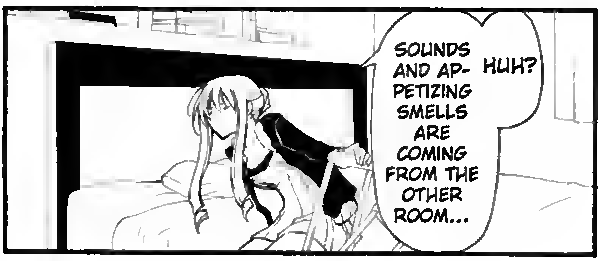
...THANKS TO THAT RITUAL...
...I NOW KNOW THIS MARK HAS SOME SORT OF POWER.
—THEN AGAIN...

JAAAA (FSHHH)
TON (CLUNK)
TON
TON
!



...AH!
IT'S NIGHTTIME ALREADY?

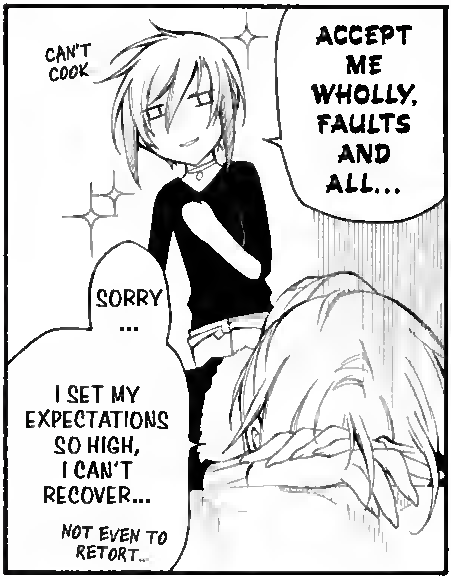


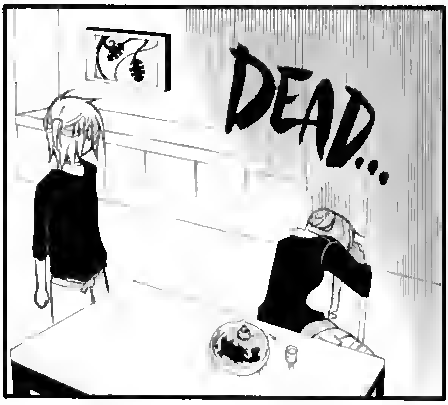

HUH?
SOUNDS AND APPETIZING SMELLS ARE COMING FROM THE OTHER ROOM...

MISHI
CTHUMP
みし
YO!
...SO WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
NOW, NOW.
SERI-OUSLY... ...I NEED TO MOVE.
HUH...? I CAN SLIP THOUGH DOORS, Y'KNOW.
ZUMOMOMO (RAAGH)
HEY, CREEP.
HOW'D YOU GET IN?
YOU'RE ASKING THAT NOW?
...COULD IT BE!!?
KUWA (SHOCK)
...C...
GROCERY BAG
WOK
VEG
APRON
IN KITCHEN

HEH HEH... YOU CALLED IT.
I'M THE HANDSOME STUD WHO'S COME WITH SOME HOME COOKING FOR HIS HOMEBOUND HONEY...
...WHO'S BEEN REDUCED TO EATING INSTANT CEREAL AND TAKEOUT.
...A DELICIOUS, HOME-COOKED MEAL...!!?
IS THAT...
DOKI (BADUM)
IT'LL BE READY IN A JIFFY... TAKE A SEAT.
KYURARARARARA (SHA-LA-LA)
AH...!!
FOR TODAY ONLY, I'LL ALLOW YOU THE LABEL "STUD" IN EXCHANGE FOR THE MEAL...! THANKS, STUD!
THE SIZZLING SOUNDS OF MEAT SEARING! AHH...!!
PANT!
PANT!
PANT!
PANT!
PANT!
AHH, THAT SAVORY AROMA OF GARLIC AND SPICY BEAN PASTE...
TSUKIMIYA-SAN, WHOSE FOOD OBSESSION HAS INTENSIFIED THANKS TO HANAMURA'S COOKING.
IT'S DONE!
SERVE IT WITH YUMMY WHITE RICE, PLEASE !!!

GOTO (KLNK)
ENJOY...
CHAOS.


CAN'T COOK
ACCEPT ME WHOLLY, FAULTS AND ALL...
SORRY ...
I SET MY EXPECTATIONS SO HIGH, I CAN'T RECOVER...
NOT EVEN TO RETORT...


DEAD..

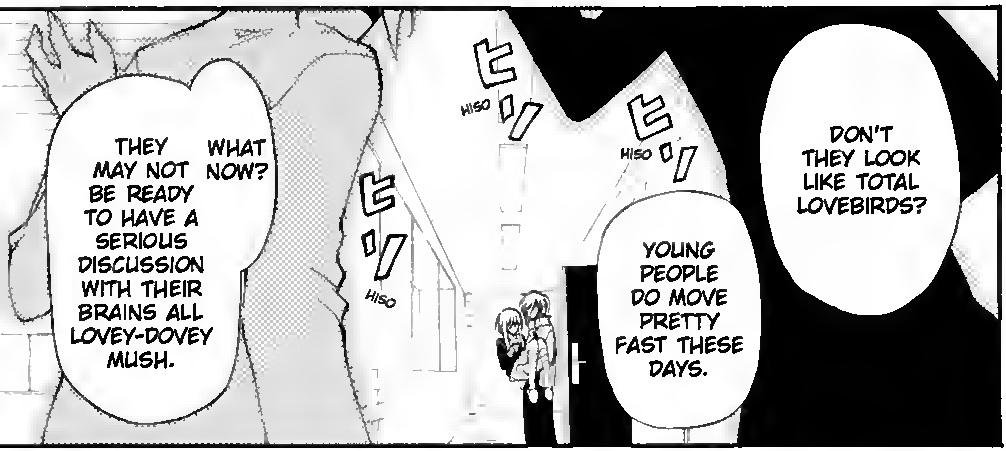
...WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY...
HAAH

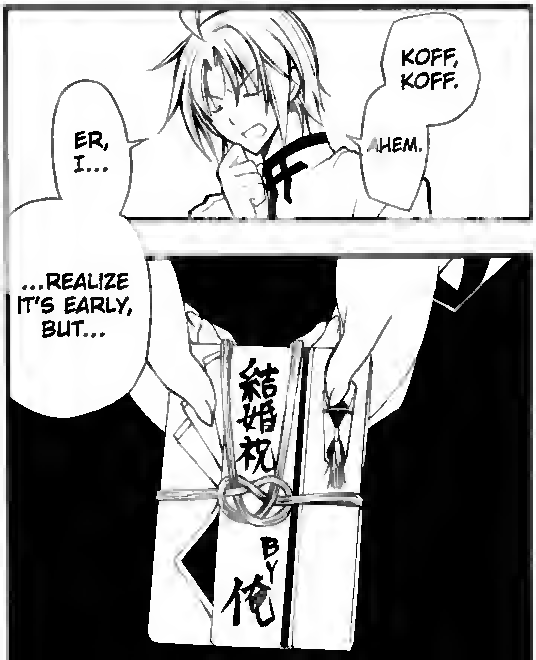
NOOO! I DON'T WANNA DIIIE!
STOP IIIT!
NO!
...YOU COULD TASTE TEST THIS, EH? IF YOU LIVE, IT'LL CALM MY STOMACH (AND MY TEMPER).
YOU...IF YOU'RE THIS INCOMPETENT, YOU SHOULD'VE JUST BOUGHT PREMADE FOOD...OR AT LEAST...

PLEASE FORGIVE THIS WORTH-LESS MAN...
HO (GRAB)
GATATA (CLATTER)
UNH.
I'M REALLY SORRY.
UNNH... SORRY.
HARA (SOB)
HARA
HARA
ZUUUN (GLOOM)
ZUUUN
...I CAN'T GO OUTSIDE WITH THESE LEGS.
JUST ORDER SOME DELIV-ERY.
NO, WE CAN DO THIS!
MY POOR TUMMY
GUUUUU (GURRRGLE)
HOW ABOUT WE GO OUT TO EAT?
...I KNOW.
PACHI (BLINK)
GAH HIS PERVERSION HAS GONE UP A NOTCH
HFF! HFF!
GUI (SLIP)
HEY ...!
THAT'S BEYOND DEGRAD-ING!
DON'T YOU DARE!!
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
AIEEE!!
GU (FWP)
IF I CRADLE YOU IN MY ARMS, IGNORING PEOPLE'S STARES AND WHISPERS...
...YOU'LL MAKE IT!!

NOW...
LET'S GO!
TO THE WORLD OUT-SIDE!!
BAAN ISLAND
ARGH! I'M GONNA DIE OF SHAME!

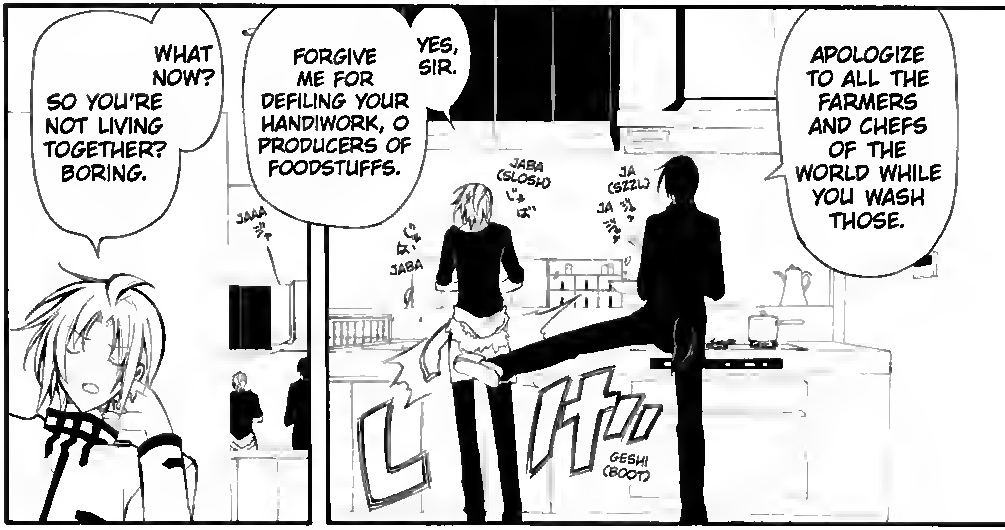
HEY.
THEY CAME OUT TOGETHER.
HISO (WHISPER)
ヒソ
PERHAPS THEY'RE COHABITATING ALREADY.
HISO
ヒソ

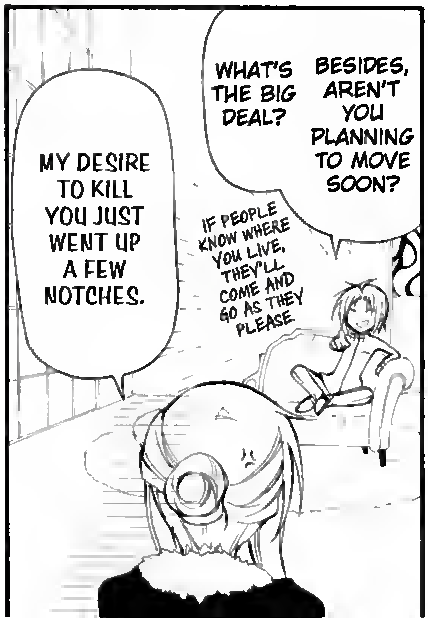

DON'T THEY LOOK LIKE TOTAL LOVEBIRDS?
HISO
ヒソ
YOUNG PEOPLE DO MOVE PRETTY FAST THESE DAYS.
HISO
ヒソ
WHAT NOW?
THEY MAY NOT BE READY TO HAVE A SERIOUS DISCUSSION WITH THEIR BRAINS ALL LOVEY-DOVEY MUSH.
HISO
ヒソ

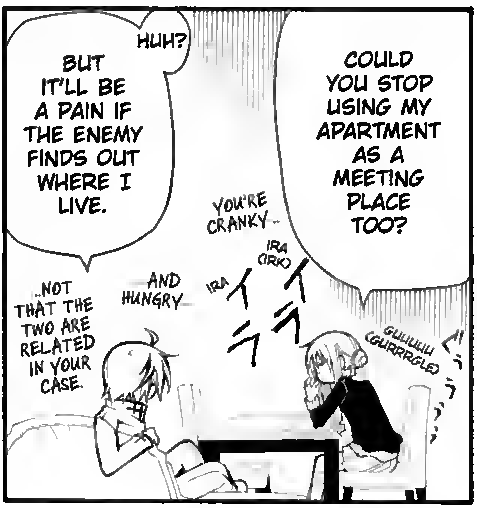

KOFF, KOFF.
AHEM.
ER, I...
...REALIZE IT'S EARLY, BUT...
結婚祝
BY
俺

I HOPE YOU TWO—
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP JUMPING TO SUCH RIDICULOUS CONCLUSIONS!?
MISHI (WHAP)
みし

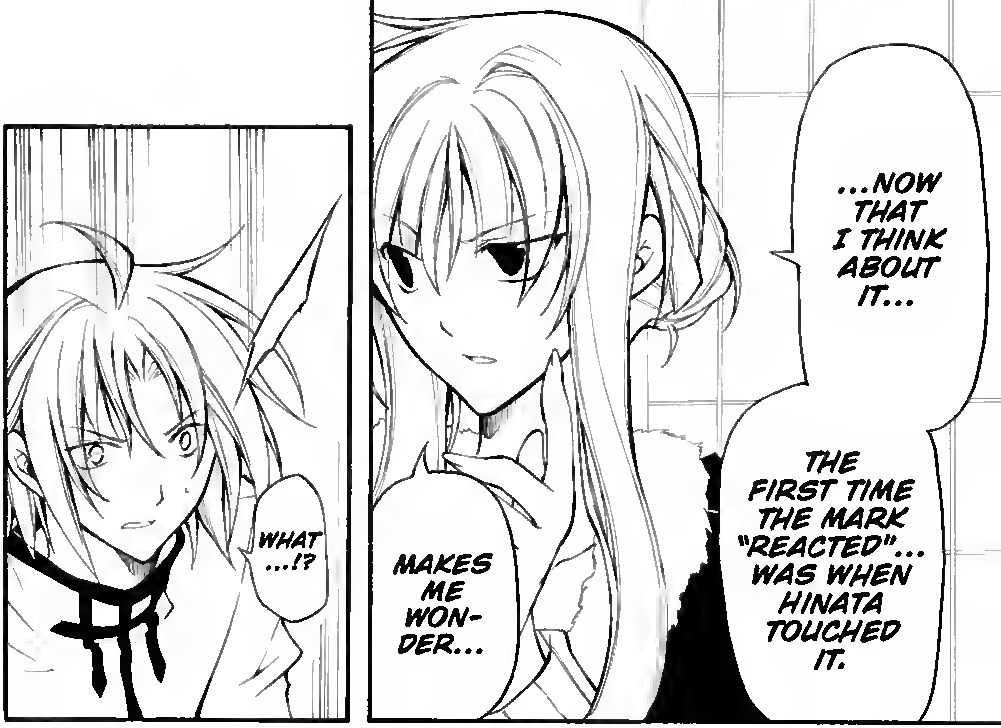
KYU (SQUIIK)
キュ
KYU
キュ

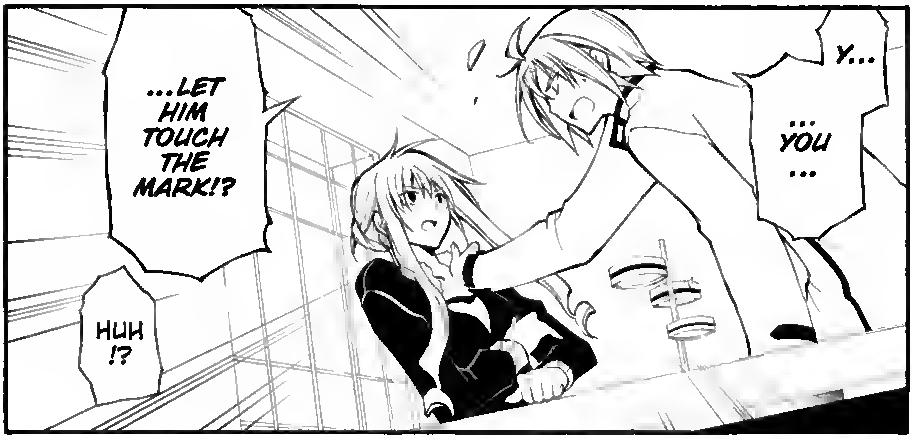

WHAT NOW? SO YOU'RE NOT LIVING TOGETHER? BORING.
FORGIVE ME FOR DEFILING YOUR HANDIWORK, O PRODUCERS OF FOODSTUFFS.
YES, SIR.
APOLOGIZE TO ALL THE FARMERS AND CHEFS OF THE WORLD WHILE YOU WASH THOSE.
JAAA
JABA
JABA (SLOSH)
JA (SIZZL)
GESHI (BOOT)

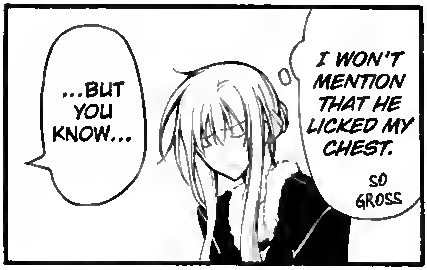

MY DESIRE TO KILL YOU JUST WENT UP A FEW NOTCHES.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
BESIDES, AREN'T YOU PLANNING TO MOVE SOON?
IF PEOPLE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE, THEY'LL COME AND GO AS THEY PLEASE


HUH?
BUT IT'LL BE A PAIN IF THE ENEMY FINDS OUT WHERE I LIVE.
COULD YOU STOP USING MY APARTMENT AS A MEETING PLACE TOO?
YOU'RE CRANKY-
IRA (IRK)
IRA
AND HUNGRY
..NOT THAT THE TWO ARE RELATED IN YOUR CASE.
GUUUUU (GURRRGLE)

SO?
HAVE YOU REMEMBERED ANYTHING ELSE SINCE THEN?
ABOUT SATSUKI AND THE OTHERS?
AND YOU'RE ONE TO BE COMPLAINING. PUMPING OTHERS FOR INTEL...
...THEN NOT GIVING BACK ANY INFO IN KIND.
LIKE THAT INTER-RUPTED RITUAL.
SOR-RY...
I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO REPORT BEYOND WHAT I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU.
AWW, TOO BAD.
OH...
...BUT DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU RAN INTO HINATA?
...AH...
THEN AGAIN...
HA...!
NOTHING THAT'D TICKLE YOUR FANCY, I'M AFRAID. SORRY.
NISO CLEERO
NISO
WHAT'D YOU AND YOUR EX TALK ABOUT?

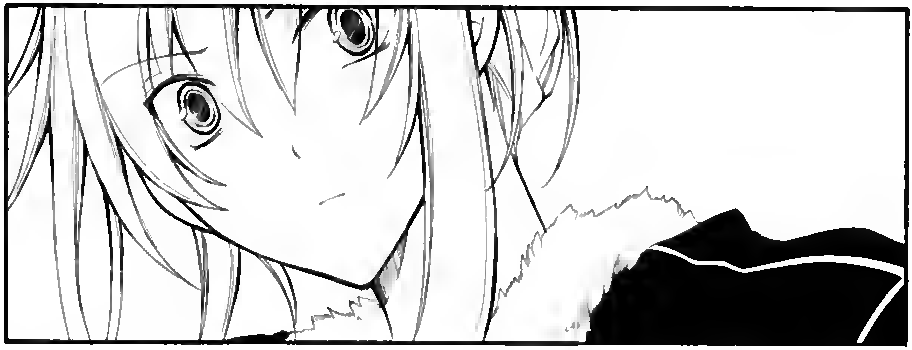

...NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
THE FIRST TIME THE MARK "REACTED"... WAS WHEN HINATA TOUCHED IT.
MAKES ME WON-DER...
WHAT ...!?


Y...
...YOU...
...LET HIM TOUCH THE MARK!?
HUH !?


I WON'T MENTION THAT HE LICKED MY CHEST.
SO GROSS
...BUT YOU KNOW...

WILL YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME?
HMM, MM-HMM...
MAKES ME WONDER IF YOU WERE MAKING OUT!
I'M LIS-TENING, I'M LIS-TENING!

...YOU COULD INTER-PRET IT TO MEAN...
...THAT HINATA DID SOMETHING TO THE MARK THAT ULTIMATELY SAVED YOU, RIGHT?

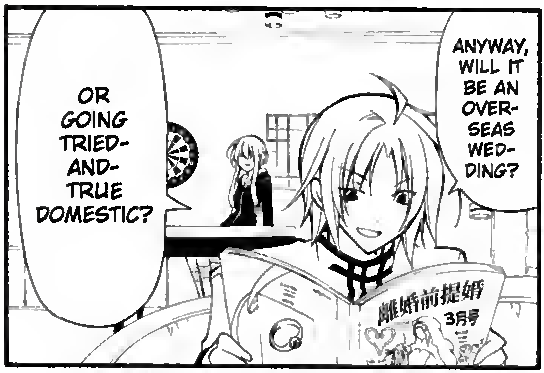


DOSA
DOSA (WHUMP)

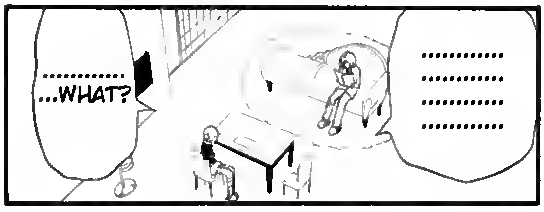
ANYWAY, MORE IMPOR-TANTLY...

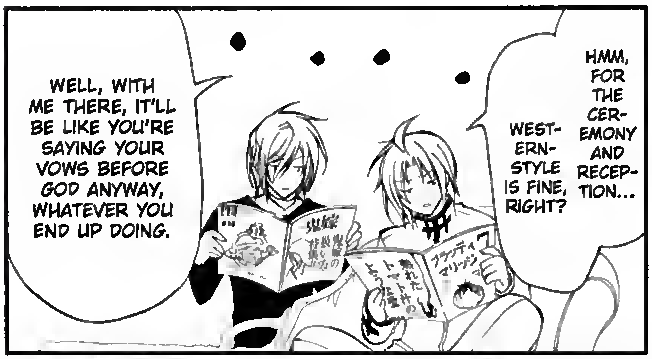
HEH.
THAT'S NOT LIKELY.

KYURA KYURA
KYURA (GLITTER)
I'M SURE YOU SAW SOMETHING IN YOUR EX...
...SINCE YOU DID GO OUT WITH HIM AND ALL...
ぽこ (PON (PAT)
...BUT NAO'S MUCH MORE OF A SURE BET— YOU OUGHT TO MARRY HIM.



MAGAZINE: MARRIAGE EXPECTED TO END IN DIVORCE / MARCH ISSUE




HMM, FOR THE CER-EMONY AND RECEP-TION...
WEST-ERN-STYLE IS FINE, RIGHT?
WELL, WITH ME THERE, IT'LL BE LIKE YOU'RE SAYING YOUR VOWS BEFORE GOD ANYWAY, WHATEVER YOU END UP DOING.

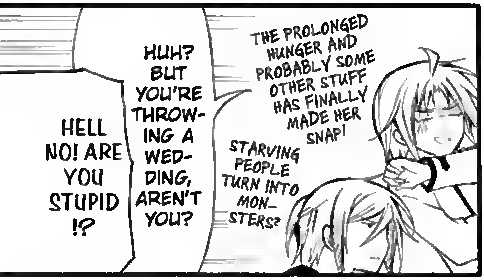
MAGAZINE (L): DEMON BRIDE / HOW TO HANDLE A DEMON BRIDE. SPECIAL FEATURE!!

MAGAZINE (R): BLOODY MARRIAGE ? / LOVE LIKE DRIPPY OVERRIPE TOMATOES

SO, UH, WHO'S GONNA OFFICI-ATE?
I GUESS ME? WANT ME TO DO IT?
SINCE I'M THE GUEST OF HONOR, RIGHT?
SIR PURE-BLOOD!
WOW, IT'D BE THE HONOR OF A LIFE-TIME!
I'LL NEED TO RECORD IT IN HIGH-DEF!

...HEY, YOU TWO IDIOTS...
...QUIT GETTING RILED UP OVER THIS BULL-SHIT...
EEK !!!
YURAAA (STAGGER)
GUKYUUUUU (GURRRGLE)
GICHI
GICHI
GICHI
GICHI

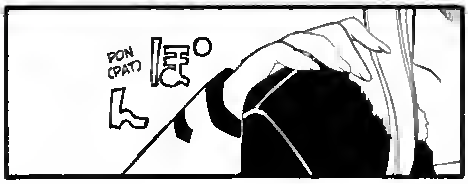
AAAAAAGH!!!
THEN FOR YOUR WEDDING GIFT...
... UH ...
GICHI (GRIND)
GICHI
GICHI
GICHI
GICHI
BURN.
* GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS, PLEASE DO NOT IMITATE.
BOOOOOOOOO (WHOOSH)


HELL NO! ARE YOU STUPID !?
HUH? BUT YOU'RE THROW-ING A WED-DING, AREN'T YOU?
THE PROLONGED HUNGER AND PROBABLY SOME OTHER STUFF HAS FINALLY MADE HER SNAP!
STARVING PEOPLE TURN INTO MON-STERS?

MARRIAGE IS ALL ABOUT LOSING A TON OF FREEDOM IN EXCHANGE FOR...
...HAVING THE WORLD OPENLY RECOGNIZE "YOU TWO ARE A COUPLE"...
KI (BLOOM)
HOW CAN YOU BE FINE WITH THAT!?
FOOL ...!

HUH... YOU'RE NOT ONE FOR CEREMO-NIES?
WRONG
WAIT. DON'T TELL ME...
YOU'RE OKAY BEING A COMMON-LAW WIFE?

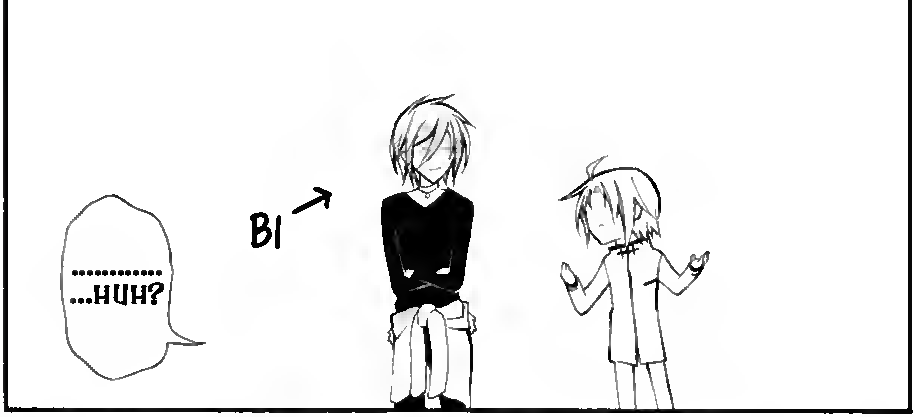
GO CHIKARA
I TOLD YOU ...
...NOT TO BE A BOTHER TO OTHERS!

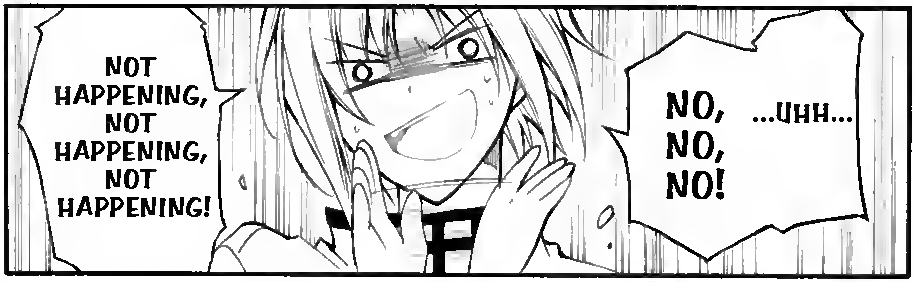

PON (PAT)

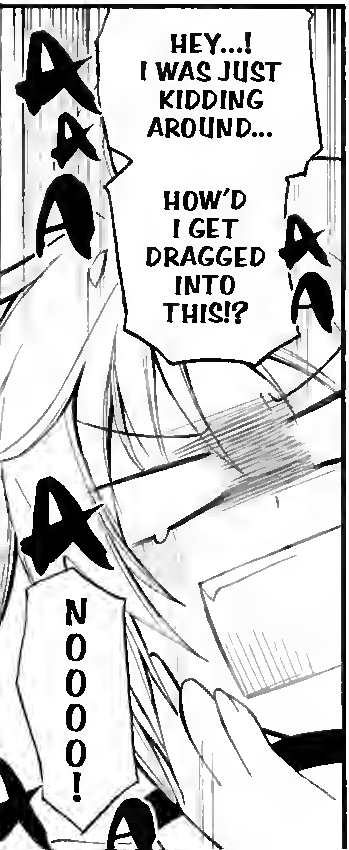
HERE YOU GO.
I APOLOGIZE THAT I WENT FOR SOMETHING I COULD WHIP UP QUICKLY OVER SOMETHING COMPLEX.
WONDERFUL...! HANAMURA-SAN!!
PLEASE EAT WELL AND HEAL QUICKLY
SALTED PORK TONGUE BOWL.

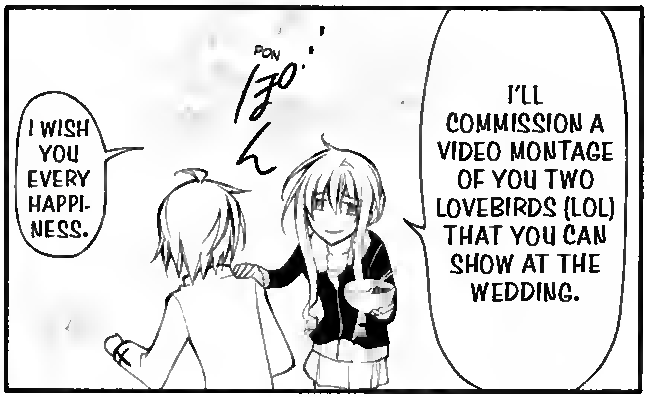
IF YOU WANT IT SO BADLY, YOU TWO GO GET HITCHED.
NAO WILL EVOLVE INTO HANAMURA ONCE YOU'VE WEDDED.
MORI CHUNCHO
MORI MORI モリ モリ

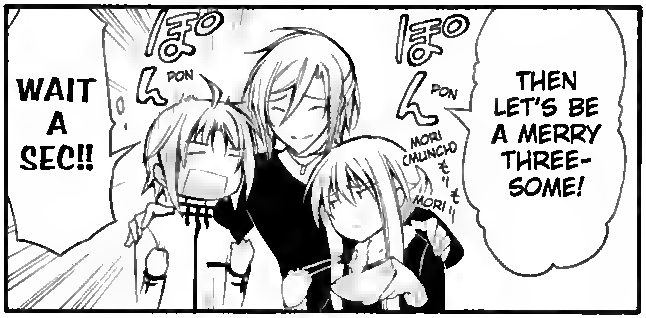
I CAN SWING EITHER WAY IF I LIKE THE PERSON.
HMPH... YOU'RE THE IDIOT! A COUPLE CONSISTS OF A MAN AND A WOMAN!
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
TWO IDIOTS— A PERFECT MATCH.
BUY CITIZENSHIP IN A COUNTRY THAT ALLOWS GAY MARRIAGE


.....
...HUH?
BI

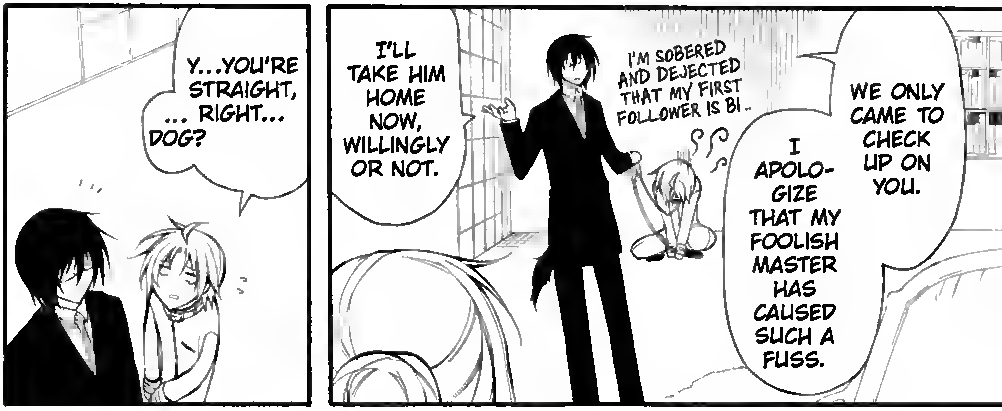

NOT HAPPENING, NOT HAPPENING, NOT HAPPENING!
NO, NO, NO!
...UHH...


HEY...! I WAS JUST KIDDING AROUND...
HOW'D I GET DRAGGED INTO THIS!?
NOOOO!

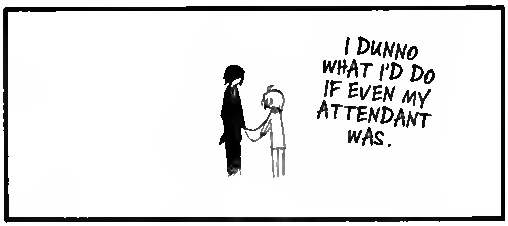

I WISH YOU EVERY HAPPI-NESS.
PON
I'LL COMMISSION A VIDEO MONTAGE OF YOU TWO LOVEBIRDS (LOL) THAT YOU CAN SHOW AT THE WEDDING.

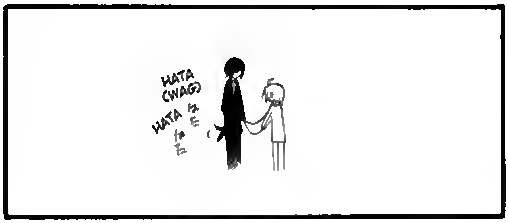

WAIT A SEC!!
PON
PON
MORI CRUNCH
MORI
THEN LET'S BE A MERRY THREE-SOME!

GASHAN
GASHAN (CLAMP)


Y...YOU'RE STRAIGHT, ... RIGHT... DOG?
I'LL TAKE HIM HOME NOW, WILLINGLY OR NOT.
I'M SOBERED AND DEJECTED THAT MY FIRST FOLLOWER IS BI..
I APOLOGIZE THAT MY FOOLISH MASTER HAS CAUSED SUCH A FUSS.
WE ONLY CAME TO CHECK UP ON YOU.

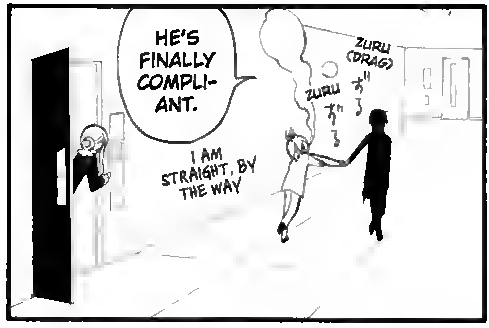
WELL, YOU SEE...


I DUNNO WHAT I'D DO IF EVEN MY ATTENDANT WAS.

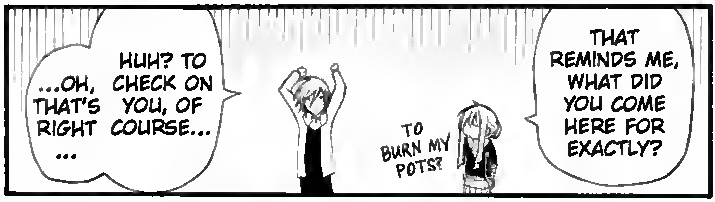

HATA (WAG)

HYOOOO (WHOOOSH)
ヒョオオ
WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY (IT'S SUCH A PRIME OPPORTUNITY TO GET A RISE OUT OF YOU THAT) I... DON'T KNOW HOW TO ANSWER...

HANA-MURA-SAN, THANK YOU FOR THE DELI-CIOUS MEAL...
I GUESS... I'LL GO HOME TOO.

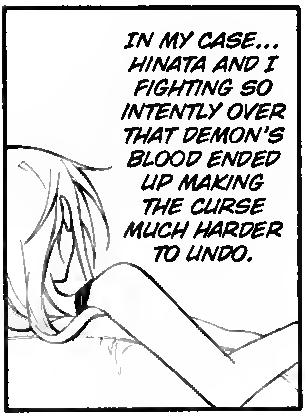

HE'S FINALLY COMPLI-ANT.
I AM STRAIGHT, BY THE WAY
ZURU (DRAG)
ZURU

?
GOOD NEWS?
YUP.

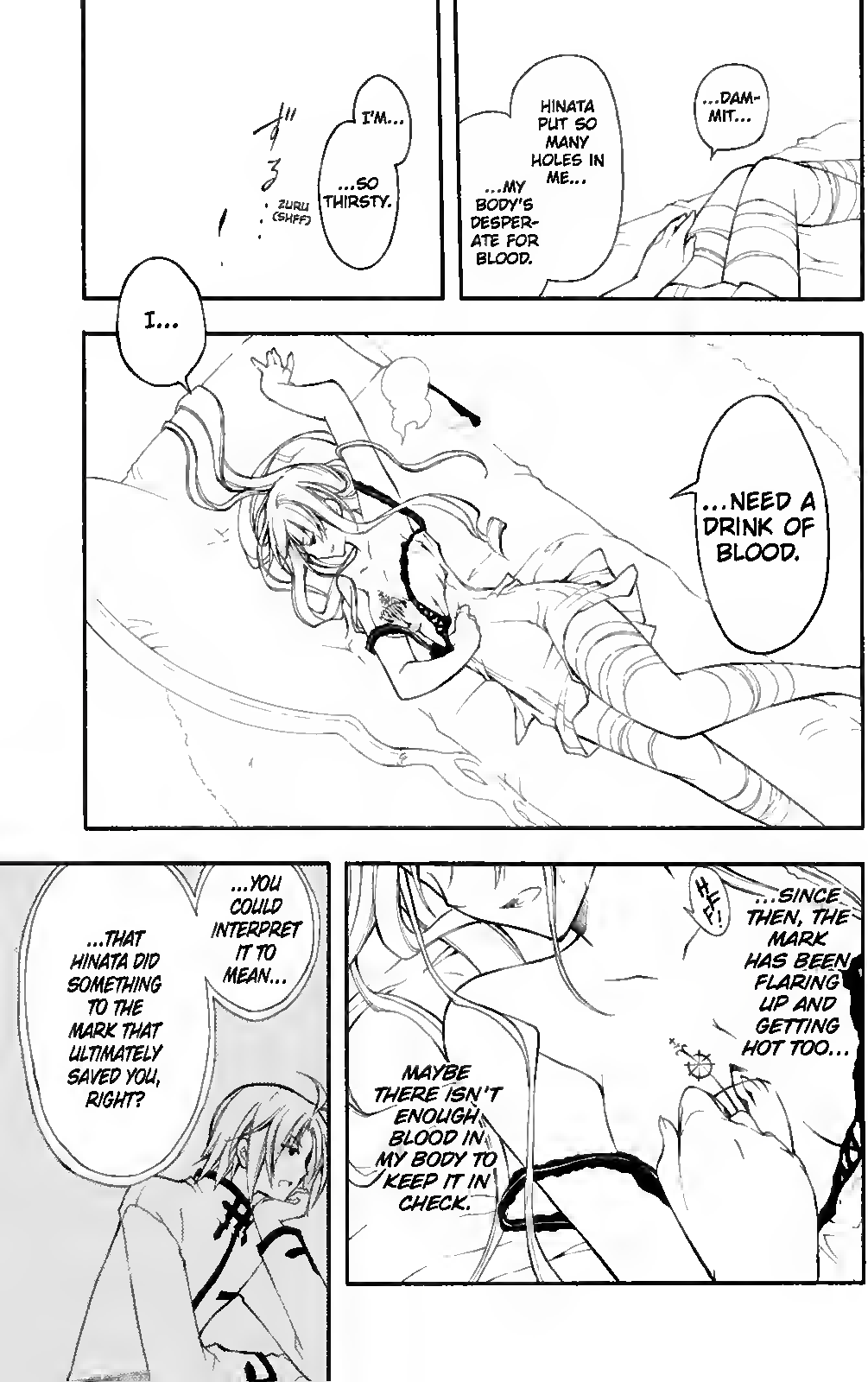

...OH, THAT'S RIGHT ...
HUH? TO CHECK ON YOU, OF COURSE...
TO BURN MY POTS?
THAT REMINDS ME, WHAT DID YOU COME HERE FOR EXACTLY?

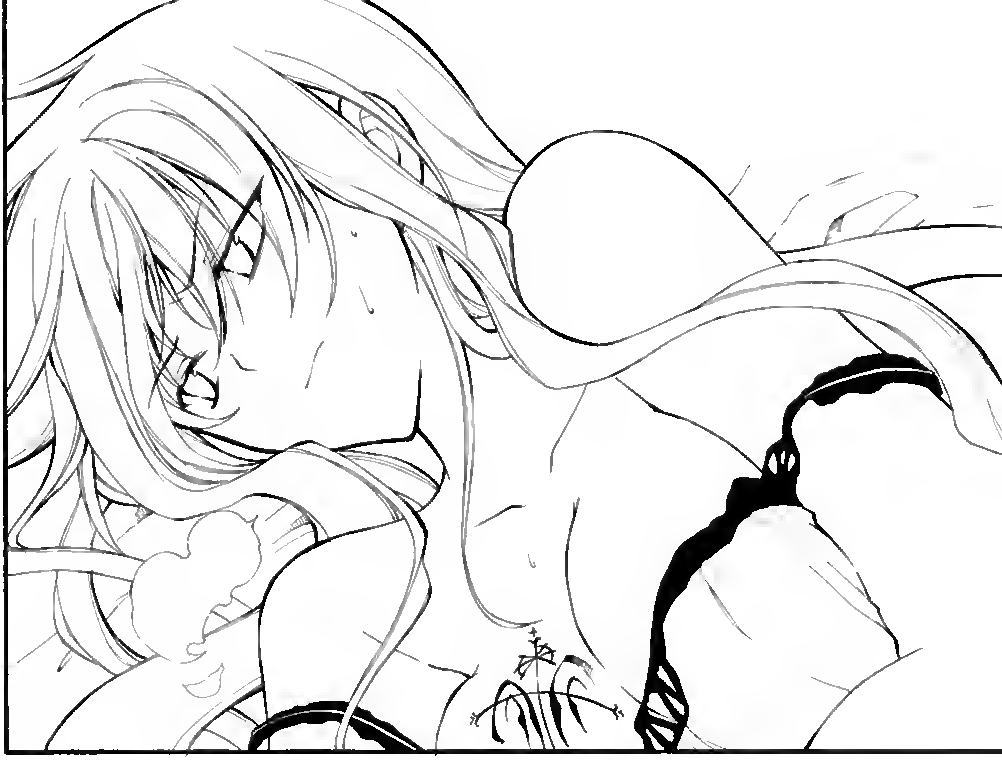
...AND I WANTED TO SHARE ...
...I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS...
ALSO ...

I'VE...
...OBTAINED INTEL ON A PURE DEMON.
SO IT WON'T BE LONG NOW...
...BEFORE I CAN ERASE MY MIXED-RACE MARK.


IN MY CASE... HINATA AND I FIGHTING SO INTENTLY OVER THAT DEMON'S BLOOD ENDED UP MAKING THE CURSE MUCH HARDER TO UNDO.

A PURE DEMON'S BLOOD... HUH.

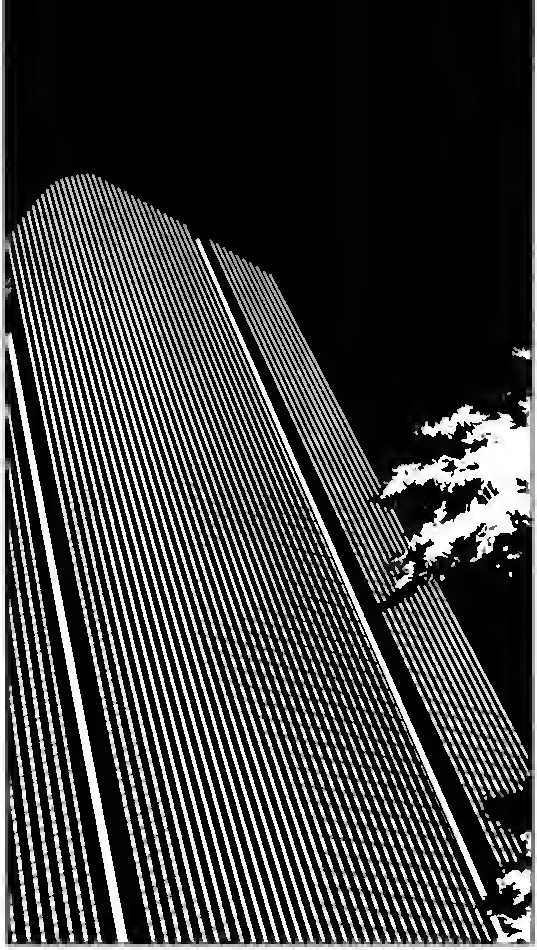

I'M...
...SO THIRSTY.
ZURU (SHFF)
...DAM-MIT...
HINATA PUT SO MANY HOLES IN ME...
...MY BODY'S DESPER-ATE FOR BLOOD.
I...
...NEED A DRINK OF BLOOD.
...SINCE THEN, THE MARK HAS BEEN FLARING UP AND GETTING HOT TOO...
HUH?
MAYBE THERE ISN'T ENOUGH BLOOD IN MY BODY TO KEEP IT IN CHECK.
...YOU COULD INTERPRET IT TO MEAN...
...THAT HINATA DID SOMETHING TO THE MARK THAT ULTIMATELY SAVED YOU, RIGHT?

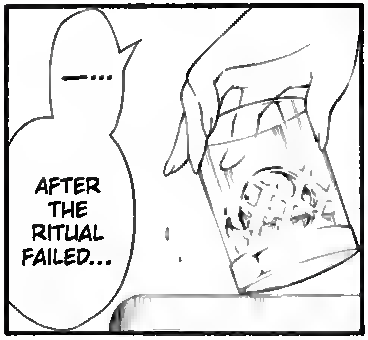


HE?
...WHAT...
...THE HELL AM I THINK-ING? STU-PID.

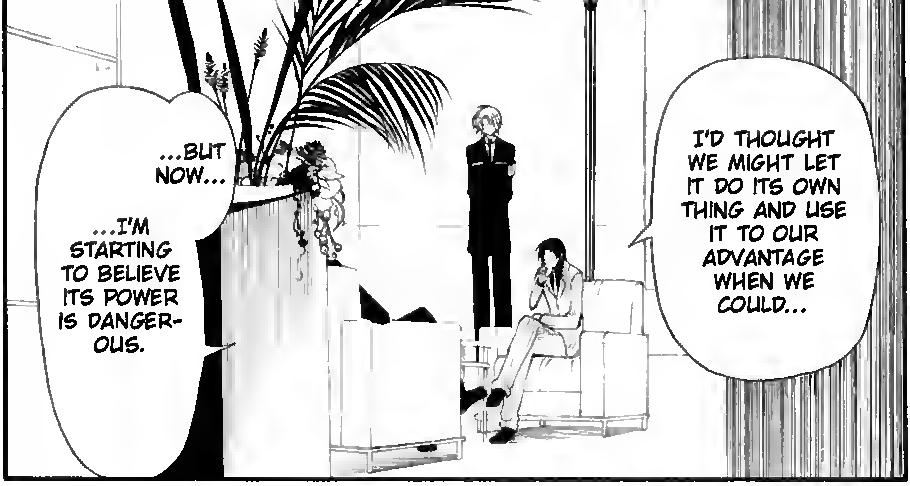
THERE'S NO WAY.

KYU (SQUEEZE)



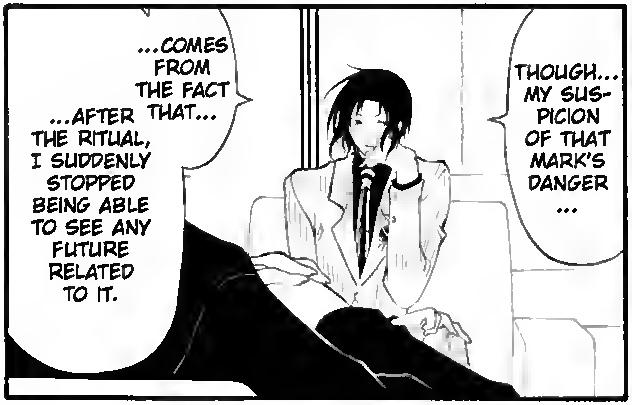

—...
AFTER THE RITUAL FAILED...

...I'VE...
...COME TO VIEW THAT MARK DIFFER-ENTLY.

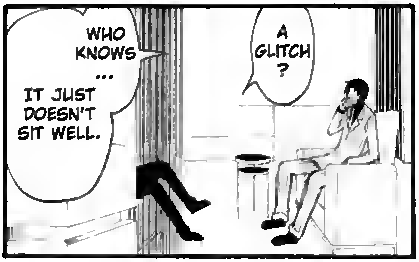

I'D THOUGHT WE MIGHT LET IT DO ITS OWN THING AND USE IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE WHEN WE COULD...
...BUT NOW...
...I'M STARTING TO BELIEVE ITS POWER IS DANGEROUS.

...THE FUTURE IS FLUID, CONSTANTLY SHIFTING...
BOTH UNFORESEEN OUTCOMES AND SHIFTING INTERPRETATIONS ARE TO BE EXPECTED.

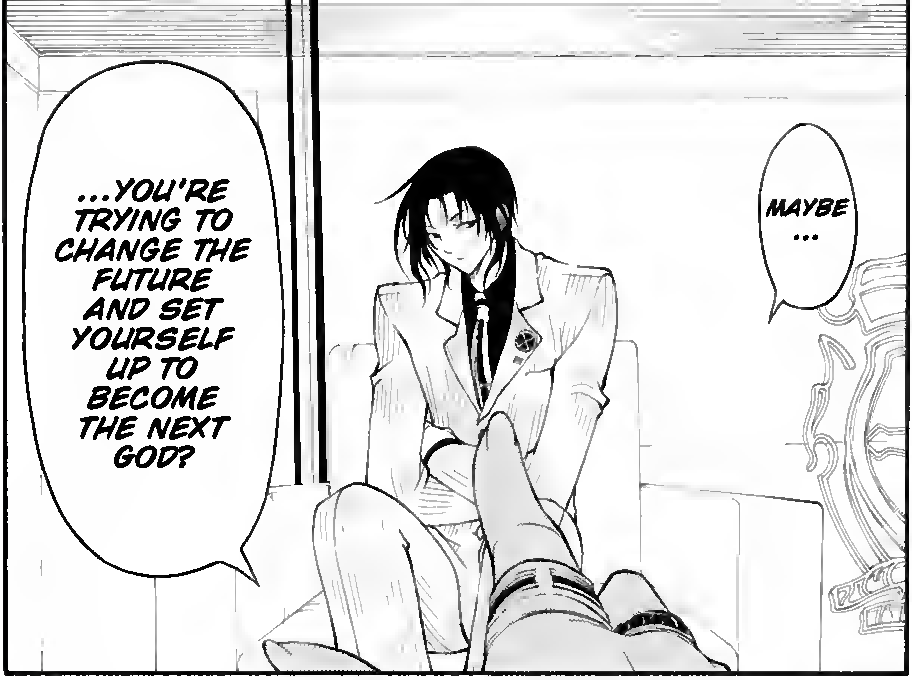
...FOR A GUY WHO CAN SEE THE FUTURE TO CHANGE HIS MIND...
...IS A RARE THING

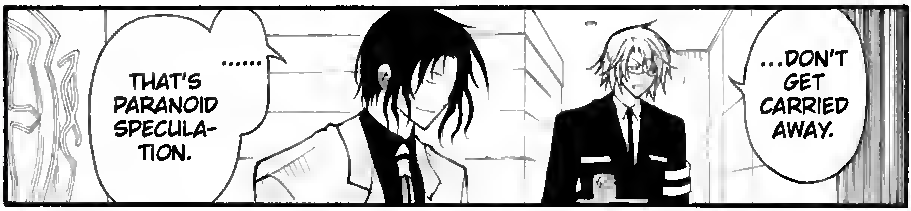

THOUGH... MY SUSPICION OF THAT MARK'S DANGER ...
...COMES FROM THE FACT THAT...
...AFTER THE RITUAL, I SUDDENLY STOPPED BEING ABLE TO SEE ANY FUTURE RELATED TO IT.

KOTO (KLACK)
WHEN ONE GETS USED TO SEEING...
...THE OPPOSITE...
...BEING BLIND BECOMES TERRIFYING.


A GLITCH ?
WHO KNOWS ...
IT JUST DOESN'T SIT WELL.

...HOWEVER...
...I'D LIKE TO ELIMINATE ALL FUTURE UNCERTAINTIES NOW.
I'LL PACIFY SATSUKI LATER, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.
WHAT'S THE FALLEN ANGEL SAY?
.....
HE'S UNWILLING TO ACCEPT IT.
DOES THAT MEAN...
...YOU WANTED A HAND IN THE CRUSADE SO BAD...
...THAT YOU'RE JUST USING HIM FOR HIS INFORMATION AND STATUS?
...YOU DON'T INTEND TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE FALLEN ANGEL?
...EVEN THOUGH YOU AND HE ARE ALLIES...
...YOU'RE DELIBERATELY TRYING TO ALTER THE ANTICIPATED FUTURE TIMELINE AS IT'S BEEN PREDICTED.
IF YOU ASK ME... IT SEEMS MORE LIKE...


...YOU'RE TRYING TO CHANGE THE FUTURE AND SET YOURSELF UP TO BECOME THE NEXT GOD?
MAYBE ...


.....
THAT'S PARANOID SPECULATION.
...DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY.

...SORRY.
SUSPICION AND A BIG MOUTH ARE PART OF MY NATURE.
SO WHAT'S THE ORDER OF THE DAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY?

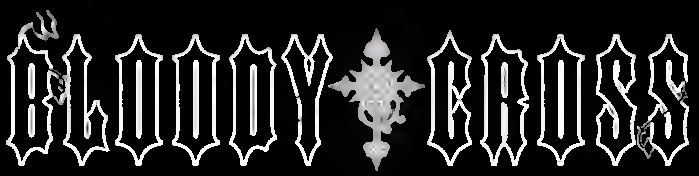
...AND I'M FOND OF YOU AS A GUEST...
...BY THE WAY, I'M PAYING YOU FOR YOUR TALENTS ...

I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD TAKE GREATER CARE IN CHOOSING YOUR WORDS WHEN SPEAKING TO ME.
...BUT DON'T FORGET THAT YOU'RE JUST A VISITOR.

...I'VE SET A PLAN IN MOTION.
I'VE LEAKED THE WHERE-ABOUTS OF A PURE DEMON TO THE OTHER SIDE.
KARA (CLINK)
IF THINGS GO AS PLANNED...
...THE MARK BEARER SHOULD SHOW UP AS WELL.
... OHH ...
YOU'RE REALLY GONNA GO AGAINST THAT FALLEN ANGEL?
THAT'S RISKY.
SO...
...YOU'LL GO KILL THE MARK BEARER FOR US, WON'T YOU?
THOUGH...
...IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD THING... HAVING YOU OWE ME ONE.

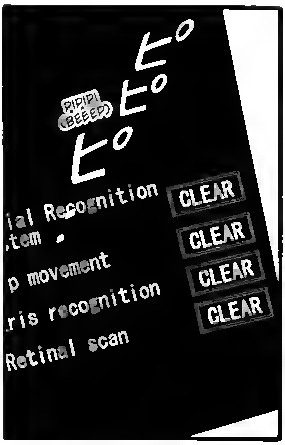
...FINE.

I JUST NEED TO GET RID OF HER, RIGHT?

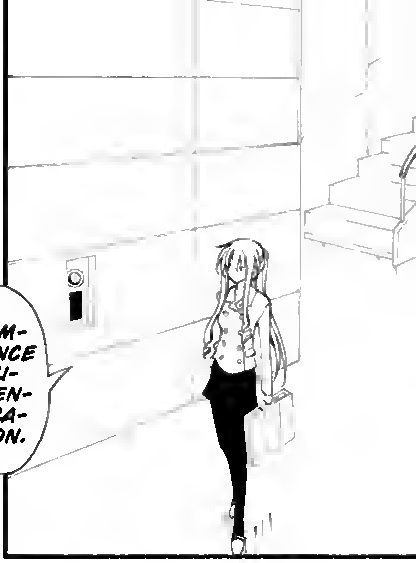

BLOODY CROSS

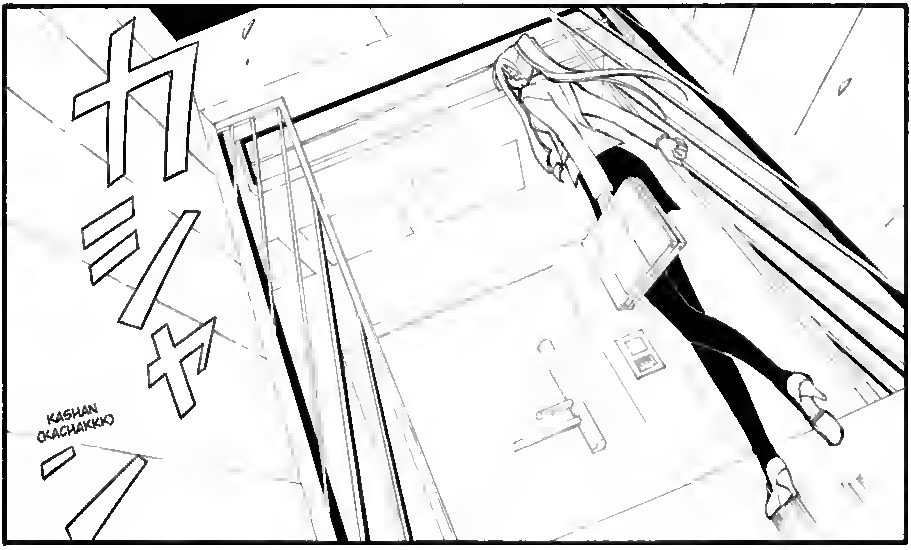
BLOODY CROSS

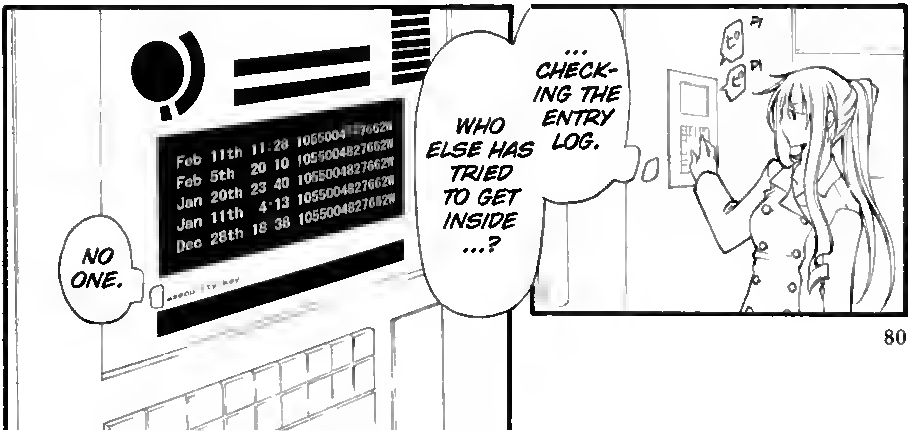
KATSU
KATSU
KATSU
KATSUN
—…
…I DON'T THINK ANYONE FOLLOWED ME HERE.


(PIPIPI BEEEEP)
ピピピ
ピピ
ピ
ial Recognition
tem
CLEAR
p movement
CLEAR
ris recognition
CLEAR
Retinal scan
CLEAR

KIII
(WHIRRR)
キィィ

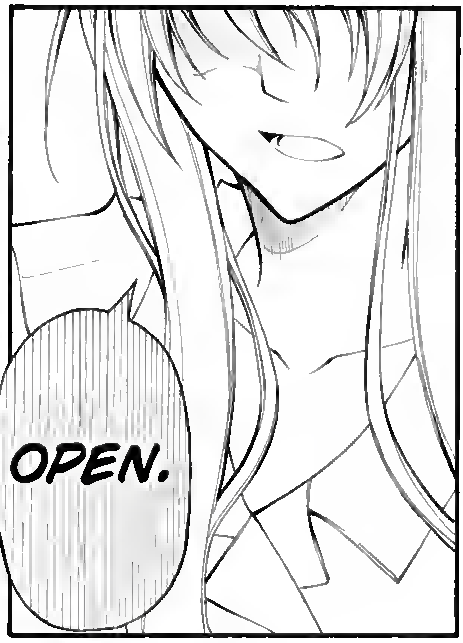

COMMENCE AUTHENTICATION.


カシャン
KASHAN
(KACHAKKK)


Feb 11th 11:28
Feb 5th 20 10
Jan 20th 23 40
Jan 11th 4:13
Dec 28th 18 38
NO ONE.
WHO ELSE HAS TRIED TO GET INSIDE ...?
...CHECKING THE ENTRY LOG.

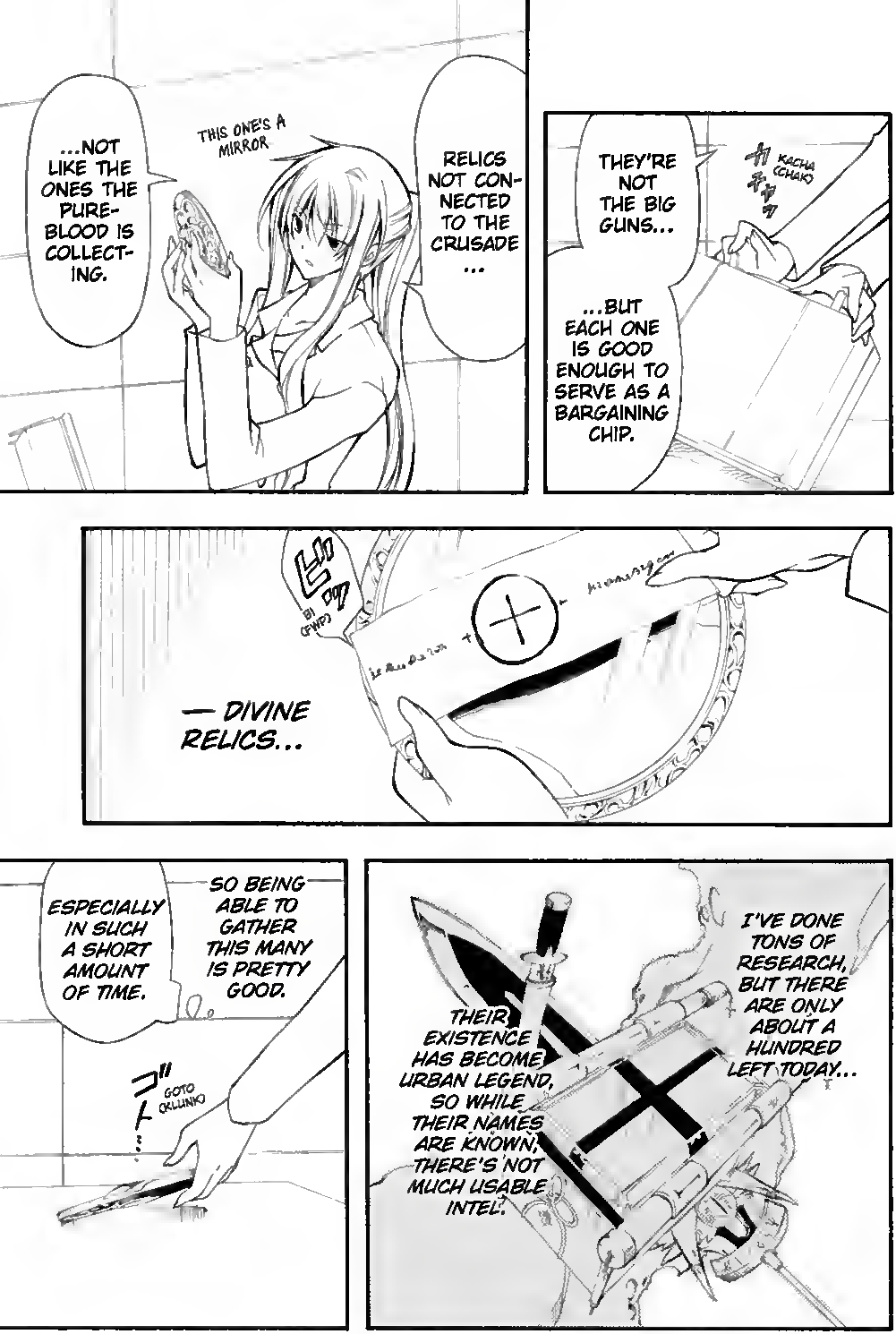
security key
****
TON (PRESS)
OKAY.
JUST RE-LEASE THE LOCK, AND...

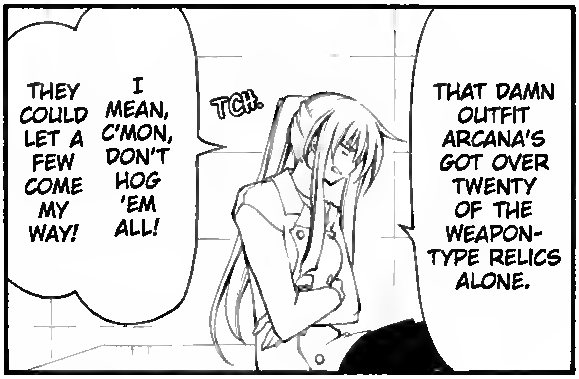
GI (CREAK)
GI
GI
GI

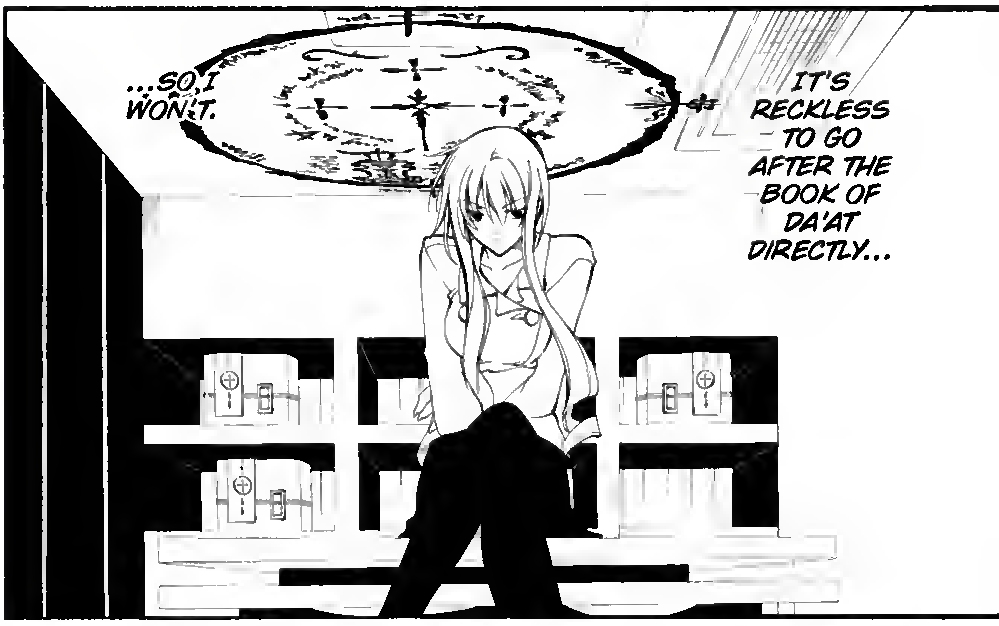

OPEN.

GI
GI
GI

Chapter 16
A Chance Encounter


...NOT LIKE THE ONES THE PURE-BLOOD IS COLLECTING.
THIS ONE'S A MIRROR
RELICS NOT CONNECTED TO THE CRUSADE ...
THEY'RE NOT THE BIG GUNS...
KACHA (CHAK)
...BUT EACH ONE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO SERVE AS A BARGAINING CHIP.
— DIVINE RELICS...
ESPECIALLY IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME.
SO BEING ABLE TO GATHER THIS MANY IS PRETTY GOOD.
GOTO (KLUNK)
THEIR EXISTENCE HAS BECOME URBAN LEGEND, SO WHILE THEIR NAMES ARE KNOWN, THERE'S NOT MUCH USABLE INTEL.
I'VE DONE TONS OF RESEARCH, BUT THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT A HUNDRED LEFT TODAY...

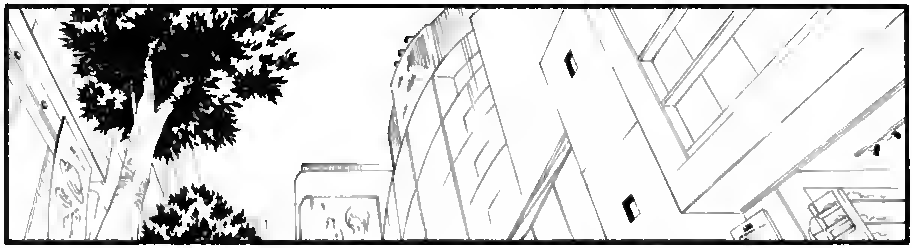

THAT DAMN OUTFIT ARCANA'S GOT OVER TWENTY OF THE WEAPON-TYPE RELICS ALONE.
TCH.
I MEAN, C'MON, DON'T HOG 'EM ALL!
THEY COULD LET A FEW COME MY WAY!

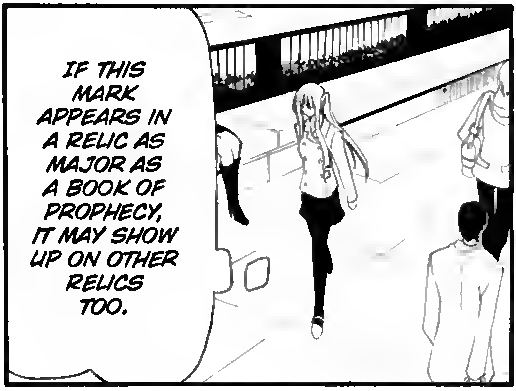

IT'S RECKLESS TO GO AFTER THE BOOK OF DA'AT DIRECTLY...
...SO I WON'T.

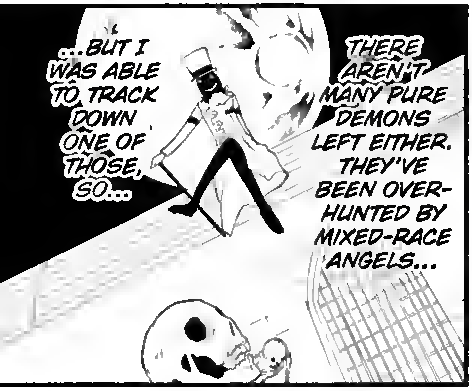
SO I NEED TO COME UP WITH A STRATEGY...
...TO STEAL IT FROM HIM.

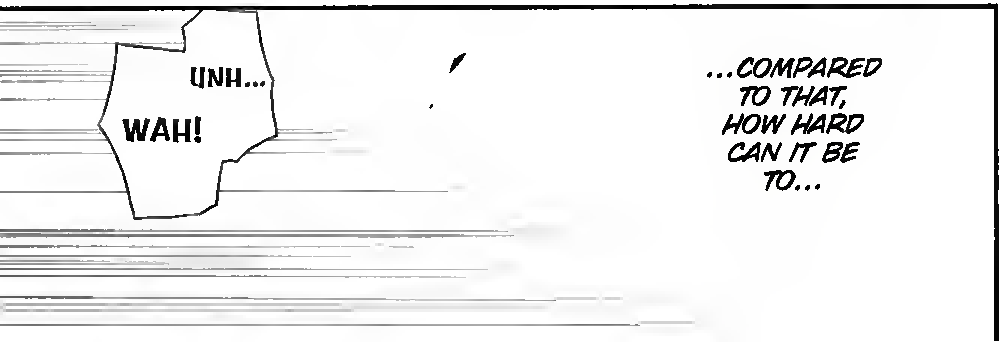
I CAN'T COUNTER...
...HIS ILLUSIONS.

THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT TIME.
RUSH-ING...
...WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS MORE DIFFICULT.



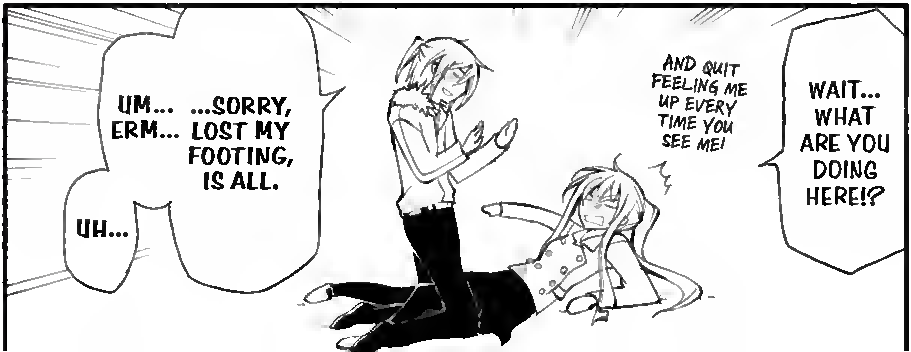

IF THIS MARK APPEARS IN A RELIC AS MAJOR AS A BOOK OF PROPHECY, IT MAY SHOW UP ON OTHER RELICS TOO.


THERE AREN'T MANY PURE DEMONS LEFT EITHER. THEY'VE BEEN OVER-HUNTED BY MIXED-RACE ANGELS...
...BUT I WAS ABLE TO TRACK DOWN ONE OF THOSE, SO...

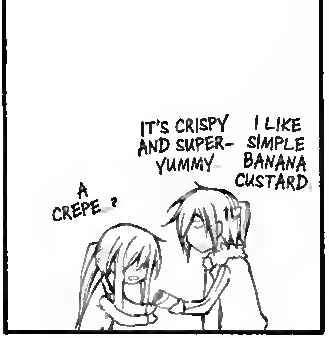

...COMPARED TO THAT, HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO...
UNH...
WAH!

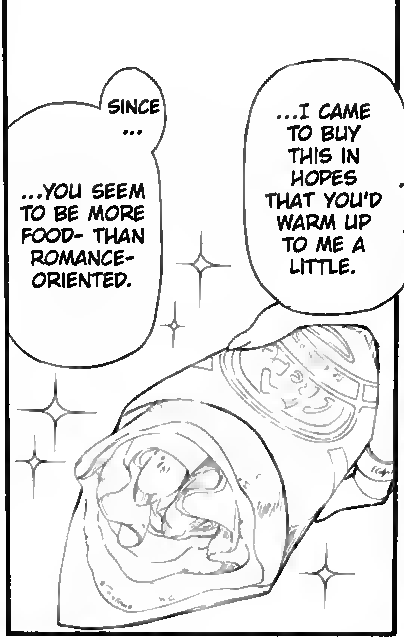
DOSAGA (THUMP)
ACK!
.....
HUH?

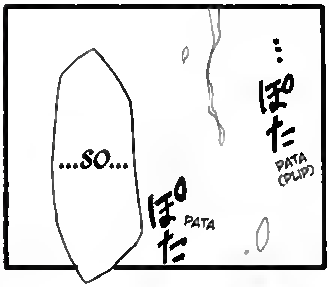
...YO.
THE... HELL ...?


UM... ERM...
...SORRY, I LOST MY FOOTING, IS ALL.
UH...
AND QUIT FEELING ME UP EVERY TIME YOU SEE ME!
WAIT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?

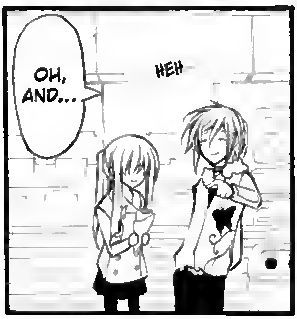
HOW FUNNY TO RUN INTO YOU...
...BY COINCI-DENCE!
BAKYUN (PNOOP)
DON'T TELL ME... HE'S BEEN TAILING ME...!?
PAN (PAT)
YEAH, COINCI-DENCE.
WOULDN'T HAVE GUESSED YOU'D HAVE ANY BUSI-NESS... HERE-ABOUTS.
HE COULD HAVE SEEN ME GOING IN AND OUT OF MY VAULT.
SO...MIND TELLING ME WHAT'S BROUGHT YOU OUT THIS WAY?
HA-HA-HA... WHAT'S WITH THAT SCARY ATTI-TUDE?
OH!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE FOUND OUT—
KOFF! KOFF! IGNORE THAT.
IT'S... ...NOT LIKE I'M A NUDIST AT HOME!
DON'T DEFLECT WITH A DUMB CONFES-SION LIKE THAT...!



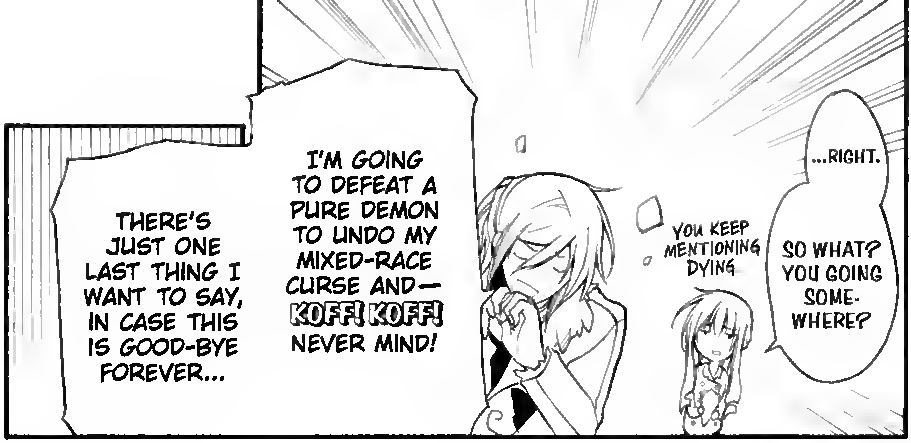

SINCE ...
...YOU SEEM TO BE MORE FOOD- THAN ROMANCE-ORIENTED.
...I CAME TO BUY THIS IN HOPES THAT YOU'D WARM UP TO ME A LITTLE.
...WELL, ACTU-ALLY...
.....
GOHO (KOFF)

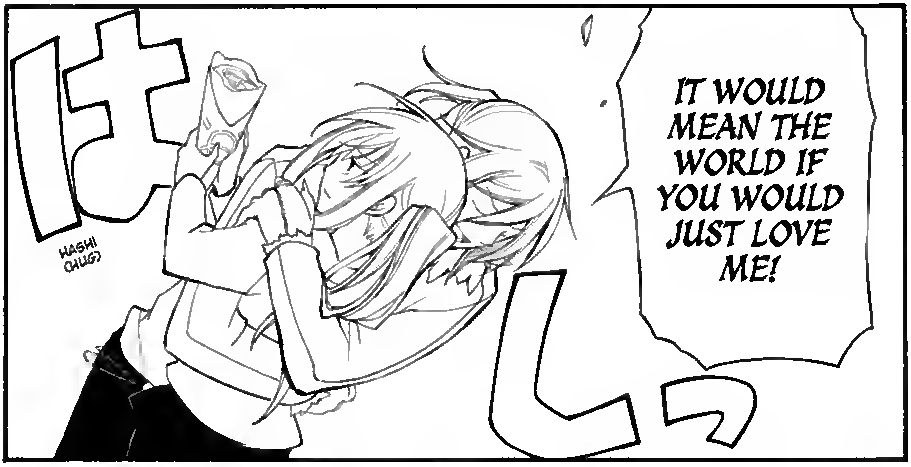


.....
...HUH...? WELL, IT'S KIND OF AWKWARD TO EAT IT NOW.
はら
HARA (WEEP)
はら
HARA
はら
HARA
...IF I SHOULD DIE...IT WOULD MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO ME IF YOU WOULD THINK OF ME FONDLY EVERY TIME YOU EAT ONE...



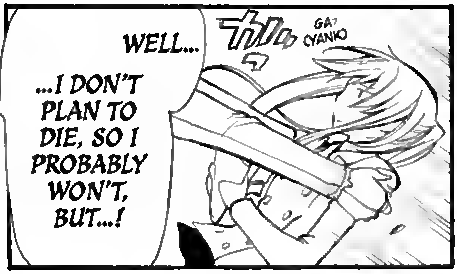
SIGN. TAIYAKI (FLAGSHIP STORE)
POSTERS DELISH, 200 YEN EACH


THERE'S JUST ONE LAST THING I WANT TO SAY, IN CASE THIS IS GOOD-BYE FOREVER...
I'M GOING TO DEFEAT A PURE DEMON TO UNDO MY MIXED-RACE CURSE AND— KOFF! KOFF! NEVER MIND!
YOU KEEP MENTIONING DYING
SO WHAT? YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?
...RIGHT.

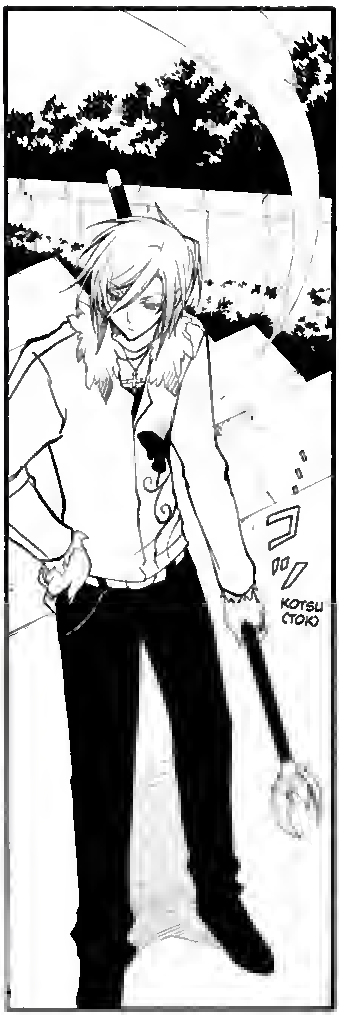

はしっ
HASHI (HUG)
IT WOULD MEAN THE WORLD IF YOU WOULD JUST LOVE ME!

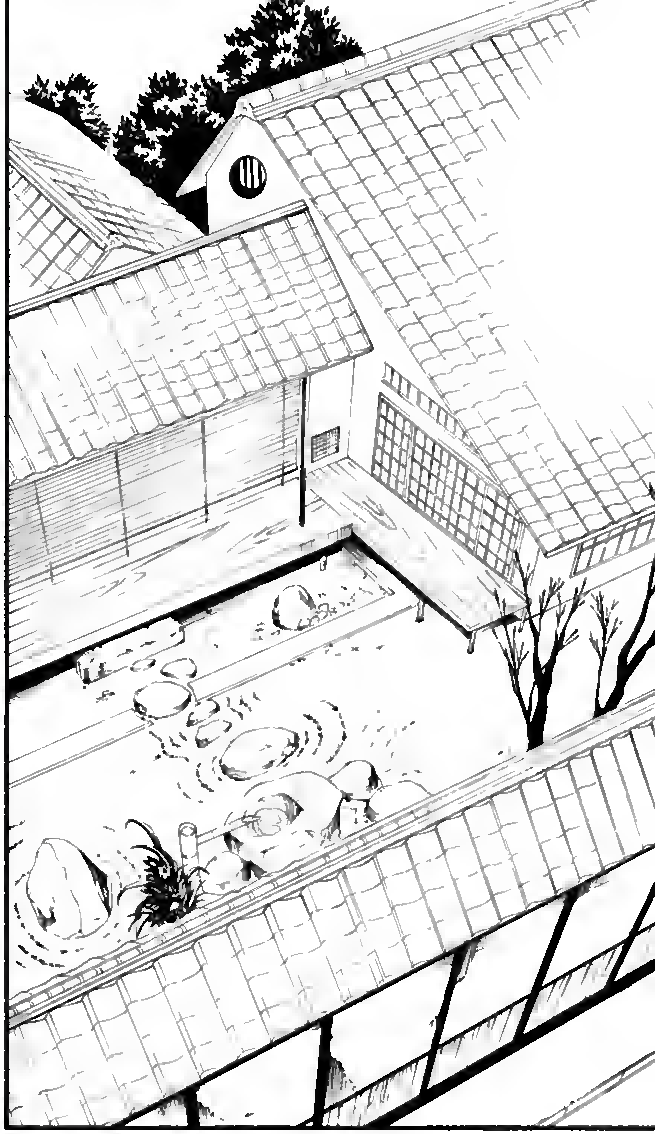
...RIGHT.
HAMU (CHOMP)
はむ

BUWA (BLOOSH)
THIS IS...

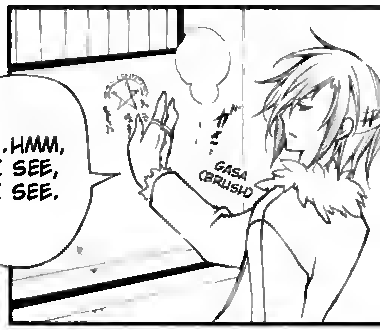

WELL...
...I DON'T PLAN TO DIE, SO I PROBABLY WON'T, BUT...!
GA' (YANK)

...FARE-WELL!!
DA (DASH)


KOTSU
(TOK)



YOU'D NEVER FIND THIS PLACE IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS HERE.
A FIVE- OR SIX-FOLD SHIELD TO PREVENT THE PURE DEMON'S AURA FROM LEAKING OUT...


...HMM, I SEE, I SEE.
GASA (RUSH)

...I WAS REAL LUCKY TO SNAG THIS INFO.
GUESS THAT MEANS...

BAN GROOMO
...A VISITOR?

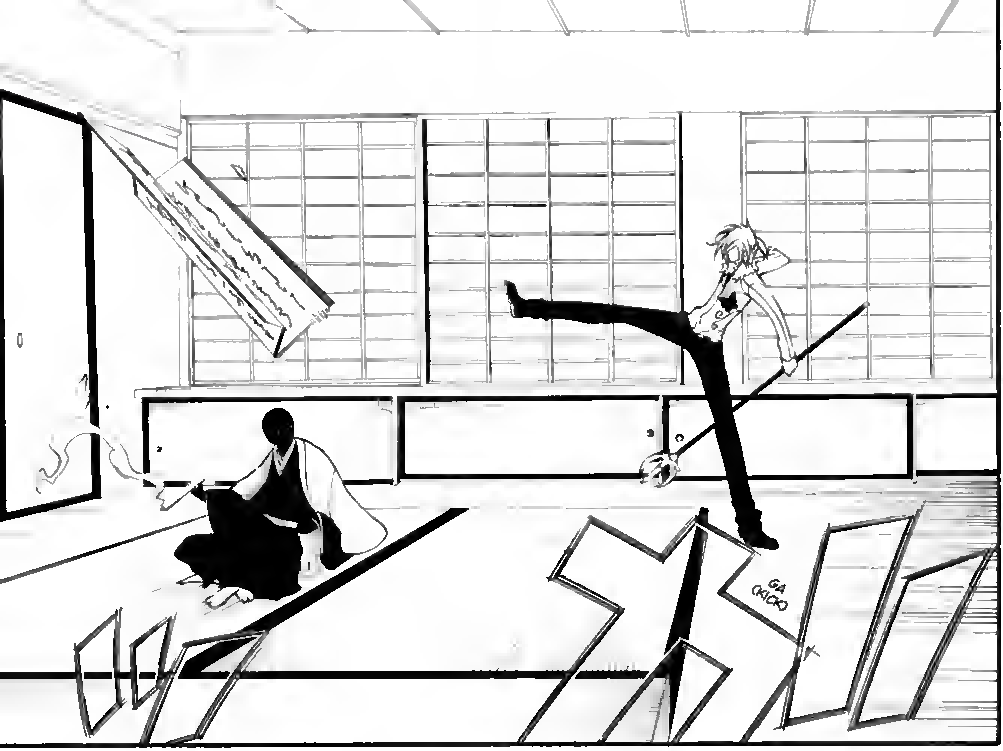
.....
WEL-COME.
DO COME IN.

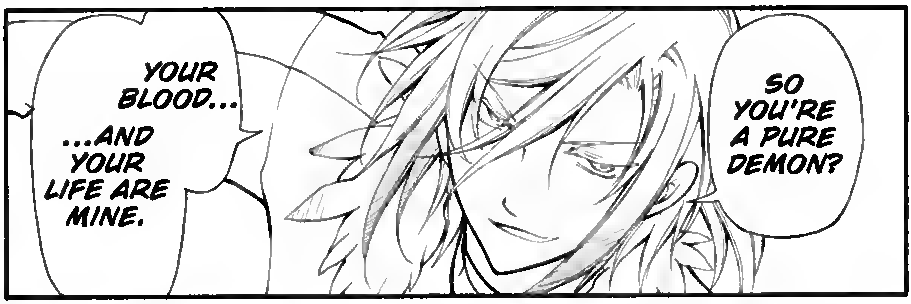
—BUT THAT'S ONLY NATU-RAL.
SINCE MY WISHES HOLD POWER!

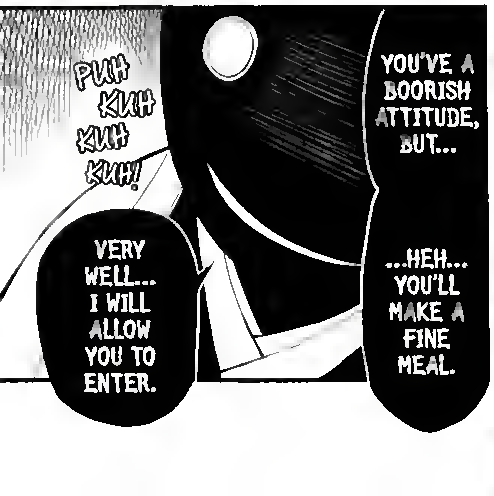
I WAS JUST WORKING OUT HOW TO UNDO THE SHIELD WHEN HE OPENED IT UP FOR ME.
...AHH...
...THINGS SURE ARE GOING SMOOTH-LY.

...AND GIVE RISE TO MIRACLES!
ZUKA (TROMP)
ZUKA
ZUKA

SEE...
ZA (SKFF)
...A STRONG WILL CAN WARP FATE...


GA (KICK)

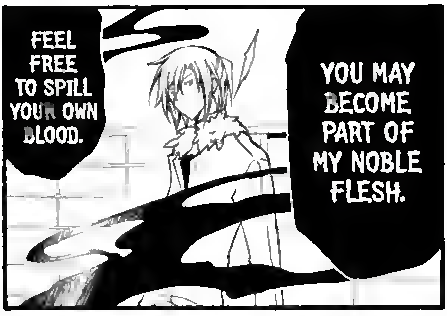

SO YOU'RE A PURE DEMON?
YOUR BLOOD...
...AND YOUR LIFE ARE MINE.


PUH KUH KUH KUH!
VERY WELL... I WILL ALLOW YOU TO ENTER.
YOU'VE A BOORISH ATTITUDE, BUT...
...HEH... YOU'LL MAKE A FINE MEAL.

PUHA (PUFF)
YOU'RE SPRY FOR A HALF-BREED.

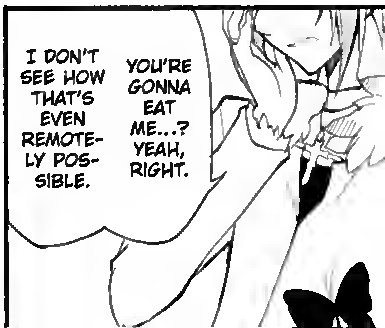
I AM A GENEROUS DEMON.
ZU
ZU
ZU
ZU (ZMM)

I WILL BE THE ONE...
...SUCKING ON YOUR FLESH AND BONES.
PUH HEH HEH HEH.


YOU MAY BECOME PART OF MY NOBLE FLESH.
FEEL FREE TO SPILL YOUR OWN BLOOD.

CONSIDERING... YOU'RE A PUPPET.

I'D HAD SUCH HIGH EXPECTATIONS.
...MAN.
HAAH...


I DON'T SEE HOW THAT'S EVEN REMOTELY POSSIBLE.
YOU'RE GONNA EAT ME...? YEAH, RIGHT.

PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
PACHI
HUH ...?
BU (PHOF)
...AWW, BORRR-ING.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU FIG-URED IT OUT...
...AFTER SUCH A SHORT EX-CHANGE.
ZAAAAAA (PHOOSH)
I THOUGHT I'D DONE A GOOD JOB OF RECREATING A PURE DEMON, BUT...
...YOU'VE GOT A SHARP NOSE...
...HUH.

SO YOU'RE THE HALF-BREED THEY CALL NAO?

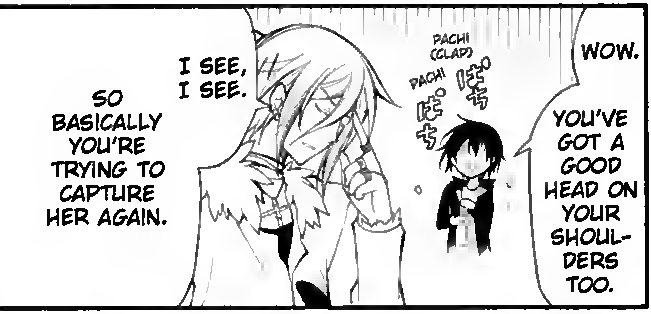
HALF-HUMAN, HALF-ANGEL, TURNS EIGHTEEN IN TWO MONTHS...
SPELLS OF LOTUS MYSTERY, SHITOU BRANCH DESCENT... ...THAT ABOUT RIGHT?

...SO. TSUKIMIYA DIDN'T COME WITH YOU?
.....
!

PORI (SKRITCH)
PORI
...SIGH...
Y'KNOW, YOU'RE ACTUALLY NOT THE ONE I NEED.
THOUGH... IF SHE'S REALLY NOT COMING, SHE SPARED ME SOME TROUBLE TOO.

NO, WAIT... IF YOU WERE, YOU COULD'VE JUST ASKED HER TO MEET YOU.
SO THEN...
...ARE YOU THE ONE WHO TRIED TO SACRIFICE HER?

WHO ARE YOU?
A FRIEND OF TSUKIMIYA'S?


WOW.
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEAD ON YOUR SHOULDERS TOO.
I SEE, I SEE.
SO BASICALLY YOU'RE TRYING TO CAPTURE HER AGAIN.

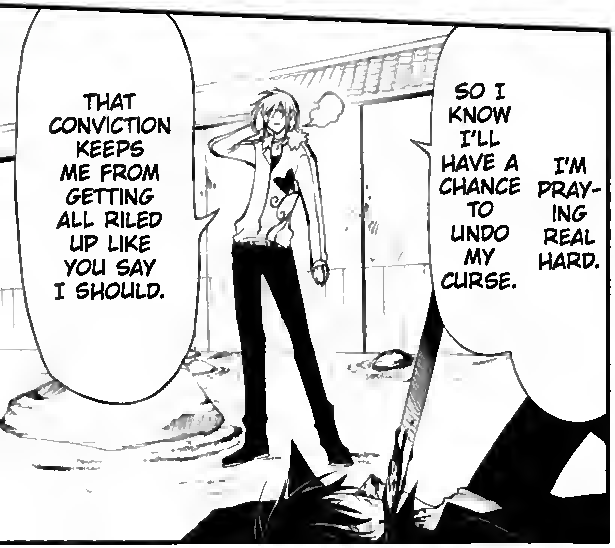
...OKAY. IN THAT CASE...
BA (PWP)
I'M TAKING YOU DOWN!

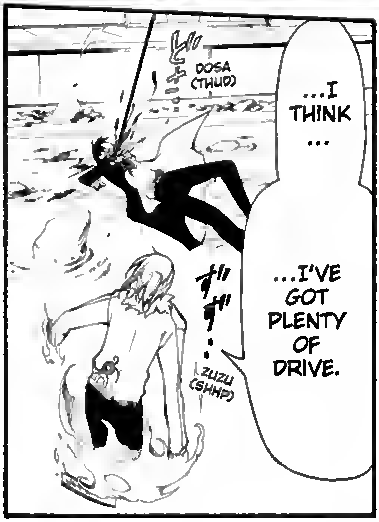
WHAT A PAIN...
YOU'RE ATTACKING ME 'COS OF THAT?
HUH?
AID AND ABET!
BITING BEAST!
PIERCING BEAST!
KOOGWOO
DENY SUMMONS.
DISASSEMBLE.
...WELL, I HATED PUNKS LIKE YOU...
...EVEN BEFORE I MET TSUKIMIYA...

...SO I'M STILL TAKING YOU DOWN!
DO (THOOM)
VUVU (WHIMMM)
...YOU'RE A BIT OF A DISAP-POINTMENT.
...YA KNOW ...
ZAZA (SKID)
...I WOULD'VE THOUGHT A CURSED HALF-BREED WOULD BE MAD WITH RAGE.
AFTER BEING TRICKED BY FAKE RUMORS OF A PURE DEMON...
PACHIN (SNAP)
...LUKE-WARM AT BEST.
BUT YOU'RE ...
RUIN-OUS CAS-KET!
RING OF YANG!

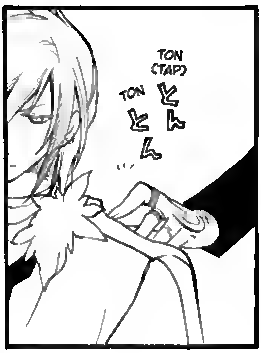
YOU...
...TOTALLY LACK THE DRIVE.
BORI (KRUNCH)
BARI (SNAP)
BARI
GORI (CRUNCH)
...PITI-FUL.
PASHI (SNATCH)
BAKUN (CHOMP)

DO (SHOONK)

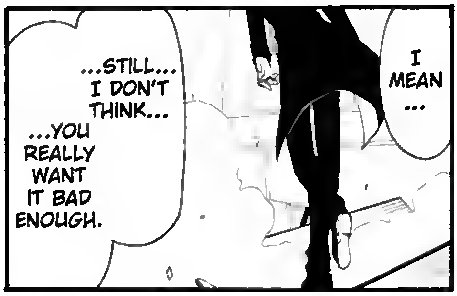

I'M PRAYING REAL HARD.
SO I KNOW I'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO UNDO MY CURSE.
THAT CONVICTION KEEPS ME FROM GETTING ALL RILED UP LIKE YOU SAY I SHOULD.


...I THINK ...
...I'VE GOT PLENTY OF DRIVE.
DOSA (THUD)
ZUZU (SHMP)

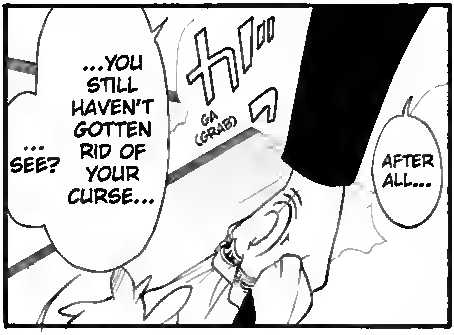
DOGGAGAGA (CRASHHH)
GA (WHAM)


TON (TAP)
TON

...IT KINDA DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TOO, DOESN'T IT?
ZAAA (FSHHD)
... WELL ...

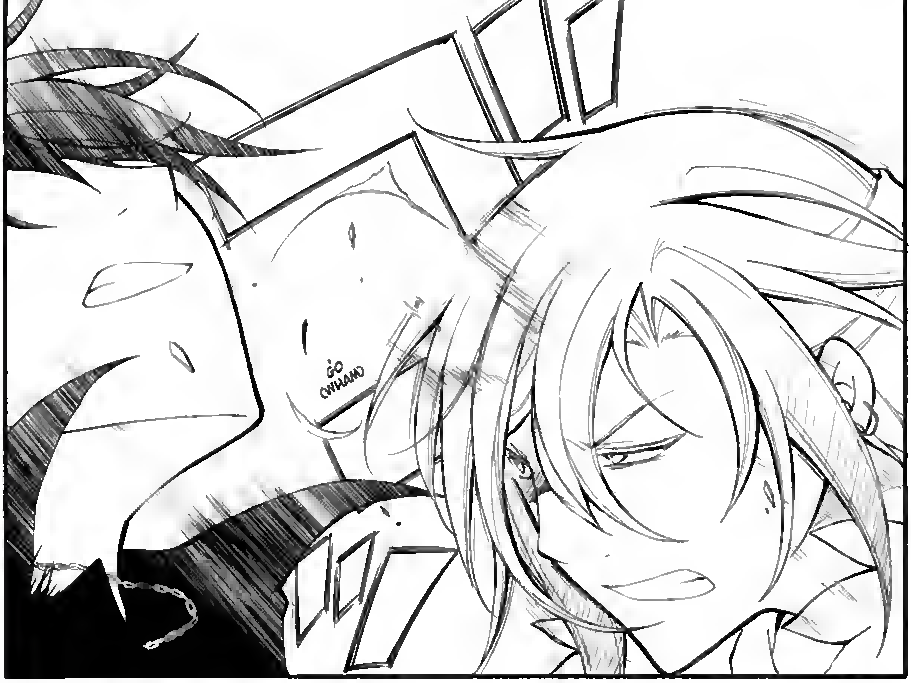

...STILL... I DON'T THINK... ...YOU REALLY WANT IT BAD ENOUGH.
I MEAN ...

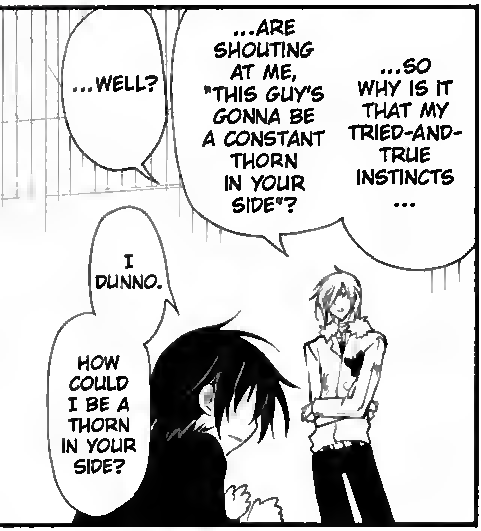
...WHY DON'T YOU PRAY HARDER FOR FASTER RESULTS ...
IF YOU REALLY CAN WISH IT AWAY...
...YOU NAIVE LITTLE BRAT?

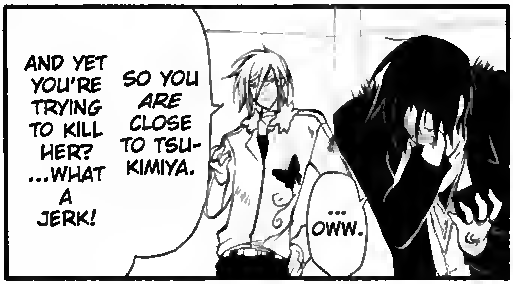

... SEE?
...YOU STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN RID OF YOUR CURSE...
GA (GRAB)
AFTER ALL...

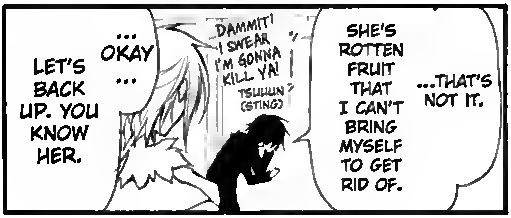
EH?
.....
...HEY.

GATATA (CLATTER)
POI (TOSS)
GEEZ.
...DRAG-GING HIS FEET ON EVERY-THING?
WHY IS TSUKI-MIYA PUTTING UP WITH THIS GUY...


GO ONWARD


...WELL?
...ARE SHOUTING AT ME, "THIS GUY'S GONNA BE A CONSTANT THORN IN YOUR SIDE"?
...SO WHY IS IT THAT MY TRIED-AND-TRUE INSTINCTS ...
I DUNNO.
HOW COULD I BE A THORN IN YOUR SIDE?


AND YET YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL HER? ...WHAT A JERK!
SO YOU ARE CLOSE TO TSUKIMIYA.
... OWW.

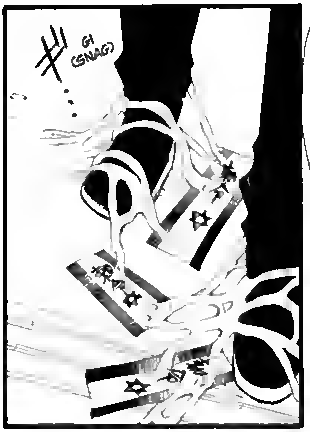

... OKAY ...
LET'S BACK UP. YOU KNOW HER.
DAMMIT! I SWEAR I'M GONNA KILL YA!
TSUUUN (STING)
SHE'S ROTTEN FRUIT THAT I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO GET RID OF.
...THAT'S NOT IT.

...SO ANY GUY WHO MAKES A PASS AT HER IS A NUISANCE TO ME.
...YOU'RE DENSE.
I'M REALLY INTO TSUKIMIYA, SEE...

PROMISE ME THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE HER...
...YOU'LL DO SOMETHING THAT'LL MAKE HER HATE YOU 100%, AND I'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP SOUNDLY...
...NOT TO MENTION, I'D BE WILLING TO LET YOU WALK AWAY RIGHT NOW.
.....
.....
.....
...WAIT ...
...WHY SHOULD I BE TAKING ORDERS FROM YOU, AGAIN?
AND WHAT'S THIS ABOUT YOU "LETTING" ME WALK AWAY?
YOU WON'T PROMISE? YOU DO STILL HAVE FEELINGS FOR HER!
YOU CASA-NOVA!
BIBI POINT!
HEY!
ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU'RE INCAPABLE OF HOLDING A NORMAL CONVERSA-TION!?

...THIS IS LUDICROUS.
I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO GAIN FROM FIGHTING YOU.
IT'S JUST A WASTE OF MY ENERGY.
BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL.

'COS I'VE GOT PLENTY TO GAIN FROM GETTING RID OF YOU...
...CREEP.


GI (SNAG)

SO I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME I MADE MY EXIT ...

WHEN DID HE..?
...GAH!

NOPE.
GU (GRAB)

DOKUN (BADUM)
AH ...!
GUSA (URGH)
A FIT TRIGGERED BY MY MIXED-RACE CURSE...
...DAMMIT! NOT NOW!

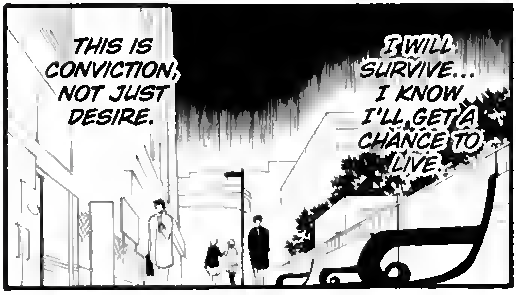
.....

IT'S PRETTY MUCH SHOUTING, "GO AHEAD AND KILL ME"...!
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
DOKUN
UGH ...!
AGH ...!
DOKUN
I'M IN TROUBLE...!
DOKUN
PANT

...AND YOU'RE CARRYING ON ABOUT LOVE AND WOMEN? ...DUMB-ASS.
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN UNDONE YOUR CURSE...
...LOVER BOY.
DON'T GET ALL GOOGLY-EYED TILL YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE THAT LONG...
...HEH.
BA (SLAM)
...AND NEED PROTEC-TION FROM A GIRL AGAIN.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO BECOME DEAD WEIGHT IN A CRITICAL SITUA-TION...

THIS IS SO STUPID. I'M OUTTA HERE.
LATER.
GU CLENCH

.....

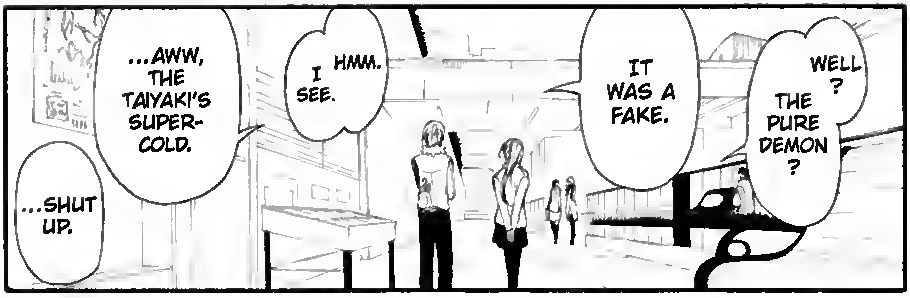

THIS IS CONVICTION, NOT JUST DESIRE.
I WILL SURVIVE... I KNOW I'LL GET A CHANCE TO LIVE.

...STILL...
I'VE NEVER HAD A WISH NOT COME TRUE BEFORE.
KIRI (GRIT)

...I HAVE A FIT...
...MY CURSE ISN'T UNDONE ...
I RUN INTO AN ANNOYING ASS LIKE THAT...
... DAMN ...
GAH.
THIS SUCKS ...

Doughnut
WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW.
BAG: TAIYAKI [FLAGSHIP STORE], SUPER-YUM!
I BOUGHT SOME TAIYAKI.
WANT SOME?
GOSO (RSTL)
JUST SO YOU'RE AWARE, I WAS STANDING IN LINE FOR ALMOST FORTY MINUTES.

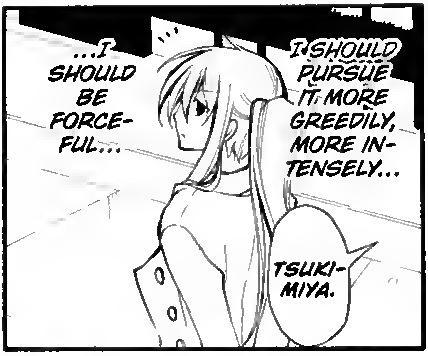
...SURE.

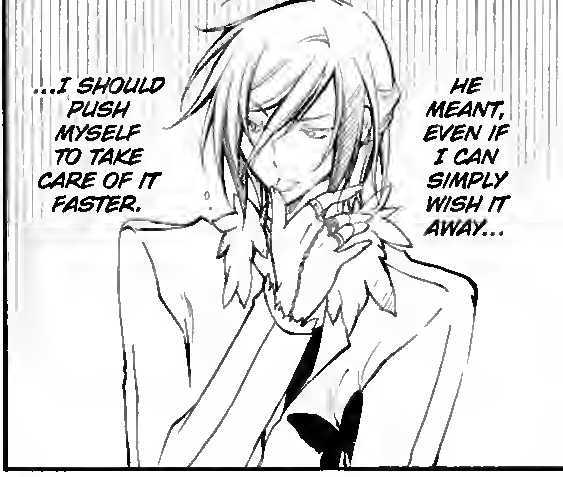

WELL? THE PURE DEMON?
IT WAS A FAKE.
HMM. I SEE.
...AWW, THE TAIYAKI'S SUPER-COLD.
...SHUT UP.

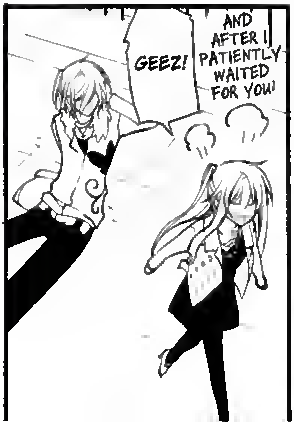
IF YOU REALLY CAN WISH IT AWAY...
...WHY DON'T YOU PRAY HARDER FOR FASTER RESULTS...

MOGU CMUNCH
MOGU もぐ
...HAAH...
BASI-CALLY...

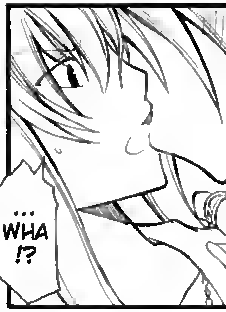
...IN ESSENCE...
...WHAT HE WAS SAYING TO ME WAS...
..."HURRY UP AND PROVE THAT YOU CAN UNDO YOUR CURSE."


...I SHOULD BE FORCE-FUL...
I SHOULD PURSUE IT MORE GREEDILY, MORE IN-TENSELY...
TSUKI-MIYA.


...I SHOULD PUSH MYSELF TO TAKE CARE OF IT FASTER.
HE MEANT, EVEN IF I CAN SIMPLY WISH IT AWAY...


GEEZ!
AND AFTER I PATIENTLY WAITED FOR YOU!

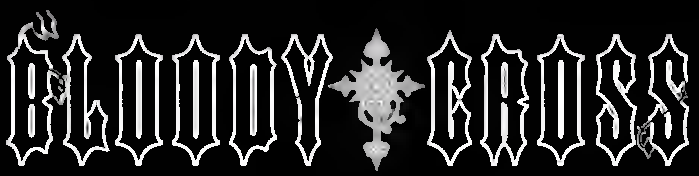
GO CHIHAYA


...
WHA!?

HUH!?
HEY...!
I'M NOT TELLING TSUKIMIYA THAT I SAW YOU.
THEN... I WILL BE ASSERTIVE AND CAVALIER.
...BOTH OF MY LIFE AND TSUKIMIYA.
AND I'M GONNA TAKE A FIRM HOLD...
I WON'T PATIENTLY WAIT AROUND FOR IT... I'M GOING TO CREATE A MIRACLE!
I'LL UNDO MY CURSE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY...!

...I'LL BE THE ONE HUMILIATING YOU... JACKASS.

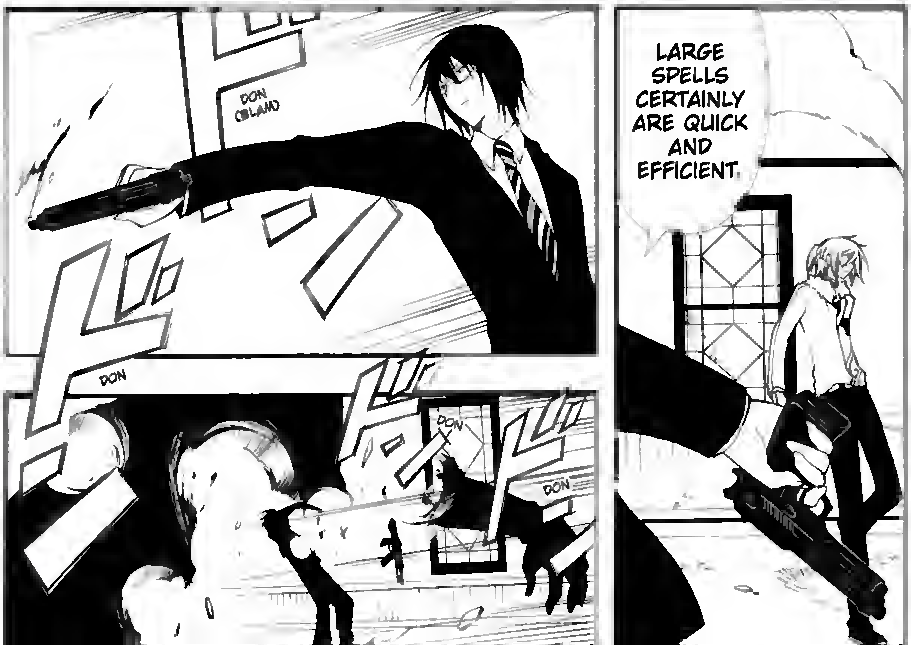
...THE NEXT TIME WE MEET...


BLOODY CROSS

BLOODY CROSS

...SHITOU CIRCLE SOVEREIGN!
ZAAA (FWSHHH)
HEROES' INNER SHROUD!
SUDDEN SUMMONS: CLEANUP!
SORRY, SMALL FRIES.
JUST NOW...
BA (FWP)
MY WISH!!
...I'M GOING THROUGH A "NO MERCY" PHASE.

Chapter 17
Depth of Feeling

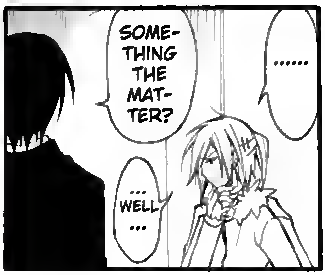


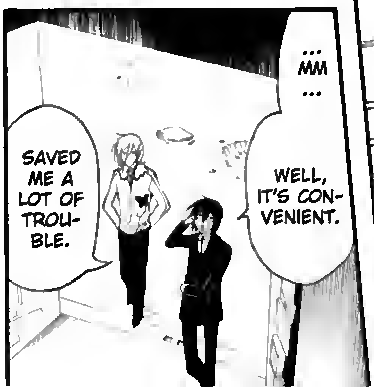
SO...
...LET'S GET TO WORK.
...THAT ABOUT IT?
SEEMS TO BE.
ZUZU
CSHHO
INSIDE HERE...
LOCKS: LOCK, SEAL
...IS THE DIVINE RELIC WE SEEK.
THERE ARE 108 LOCKS IN TOTAL... BUT I HAVE ALL OF THE SECURITY CODES.
MEMO BOOK
108 !?
LET'S START AT THE TOP RIGHT.
HUH ...?
N-NO THANKS.
I'LL JUST OPEN IT MY WAY.

CLEAR AWAY ALL IMPEDI-MENTS ...
...THAT HINDER THE OPEN-ING OF THIS DOOR.
EN-CROA-CH.
BRAIN-WASH.
REMOVE RES-TRIC-TIONS.

GIIII (CREAK)

LOCKS SEAL, RESCIND
UNLOCK IMPE-RIAL EDICT!
GACHA (KACHAK)
GACHA
GACHA
GACHA
GACHA
GACHA
CLEAR
解除
OPEN

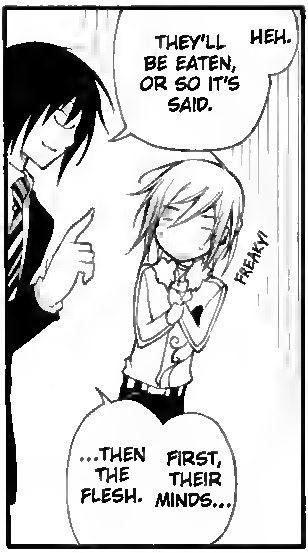

SOME-THING THE MAT-TER?
.....
... WELL ...


... MM ...
WELL, IT'S CON-VENIENT.
SAVED ME A LOT OF TROU-BLE.

...ONLY A FEW DEMONS AND THIS LOCKED DOOR...ARE GUARDING THE RELIC?
SEEMS A LITTLE TOO LAX.
AH... NO NEED TO WORRY.
LOOSE SECURITY IS THE NORM, NOT THE EXCEPTION.
?
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
FOR THOSE DIVINE RELICS THAT HAVE PASSED INTO MORTAL HANDS...
KOTSU
KOTSU (TOKK)
...ONCE THEIR HIDING PLACE BECOMES KNOWN...
...IT'S ALMOST A CERTAINTY THAT HALF OF THEM WILL BE SNATCHED AWAY.
THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN KEEP GOD'S RELICS IN THEIR POSSESSION...
...ARE GOD, GOD CANDIDATES, OR EXTREMELY RESILIENT SORTS...
...SO HEAVY SECURITY BEYOND THIS IS RATHER POINTLESS.
WHAT IF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THEM...
...COLLECTS AND STOWS RELICS?
?

CHOMP!

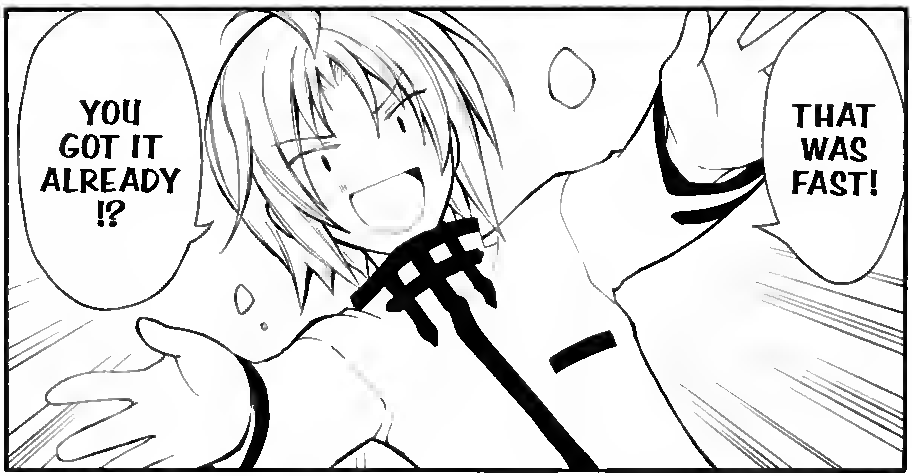
THEY DON'T HOLD SUPER-NATURAL POWER FOR NOTHING.
THOUGH I'VE HEARD KEEPING WEAPON TYPES IS LESS PERILOUS...


HEH.
THEY'LL BE EATEN, OR SO IT'S SAID.
FREAK!
...THEN THE FLESH.
FIRST, THEIR MINDS...

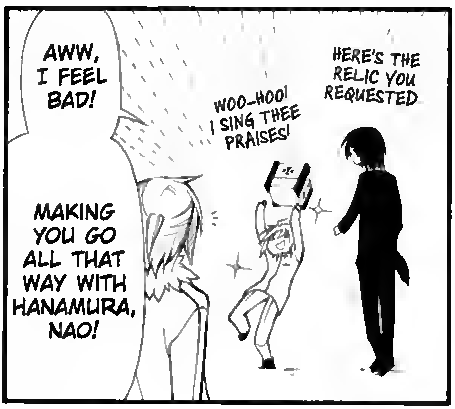
ONE'S LIFE IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN A RELIC.
...SO IT'S WISER NOT TO.
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
...FURTHERMORE, OWNING A RELIC WOULD GIVE OTHERS INCENTIVE TO COME AFTER YOU...

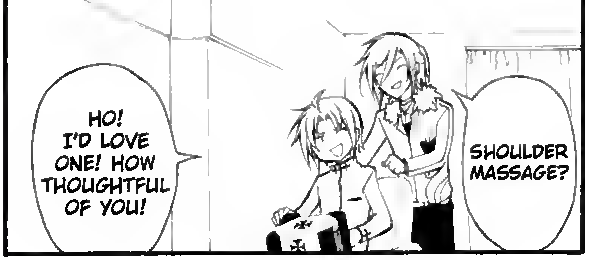
...NOW, THEN ...
...WITH THE RELIC OBTAINED ...

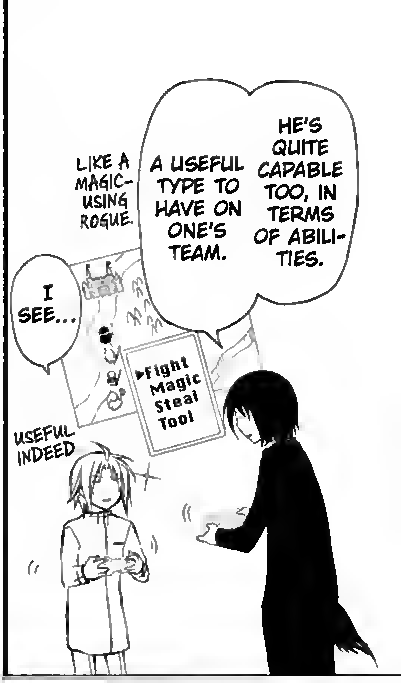
MISSION ACCOM-PLISHED!

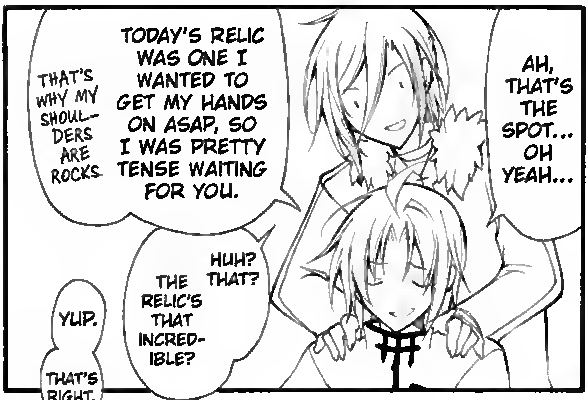

YOU GOT IT ALREADY !?
THAT WAS FAST!

AHH!! YOUR HUMILITY!
I WISH CERTAIN IDIOTS WOULD FOLLOW YOUR LEAD!
ANYTHING FOR MY LORD PURE-BLOOD.
PLEASE CALL ON ME ANYTIME

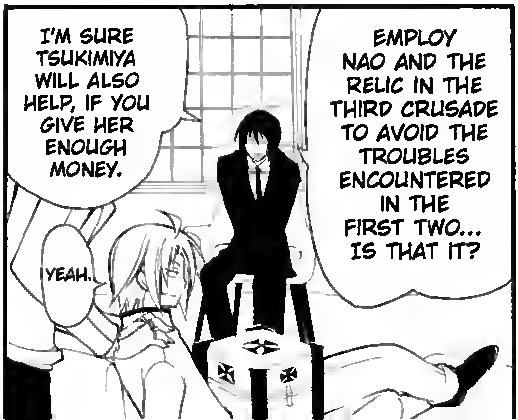

AWW, I FEEL BAD!
MAKING YOU GO ALL THAT WAY WITH HANAMURA, NAO!
WOO-HOO! I SING THEE PRAISES!
HERE'S THE RELIC YOU REQUESTED

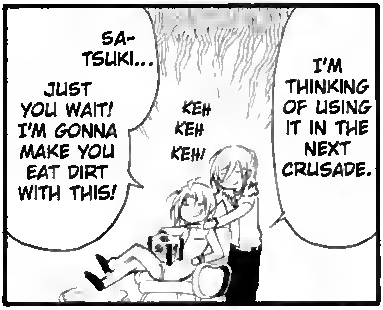

SHOULDER MASSAGE?
HO! I'D LOVE ONE! HOW THOUGHTFUL OF YOU!


HE'S QUITE CAPABLE TOO, IN TERMS OF ABILITIES.
A USEFUL TYPE TO HAVE ON ONE'S TEAM.
LIKE A MAGIC-USING ROGUE.
I SEE...
▸Fight Magic Steal Tool
USEFUL INDEED

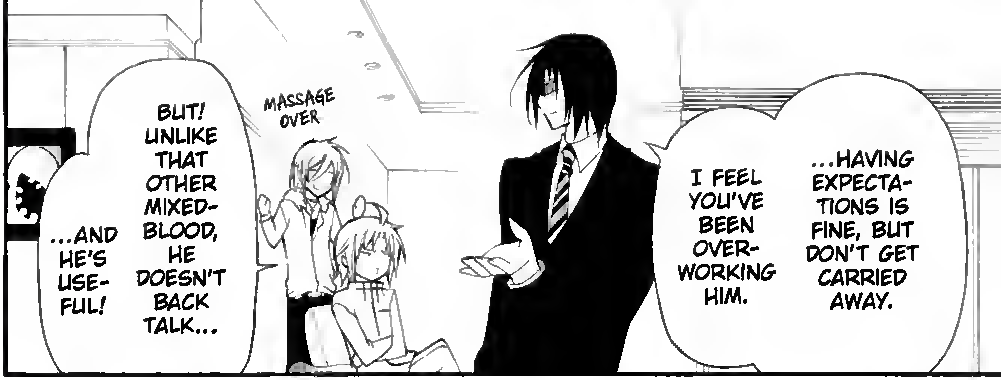

AH, THAT'S THE SPOT... OH YEAH...
TODAY'S RELIC WAS ONE I WANTED TO GET MY HANDS ON ASAP, SO I WAS PRETTY TENSE WAITING FOR YOU.
THAT'S WHY MY SHOULDERS ARE ROCKS.
HUH? THAT? THE RELIC'S THAT INCREDIBLE?
YUP. THAT'S RIGHT.

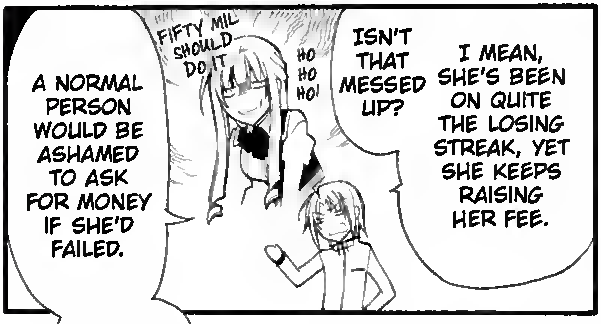
IT'S GOT AN ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL EFFECT.

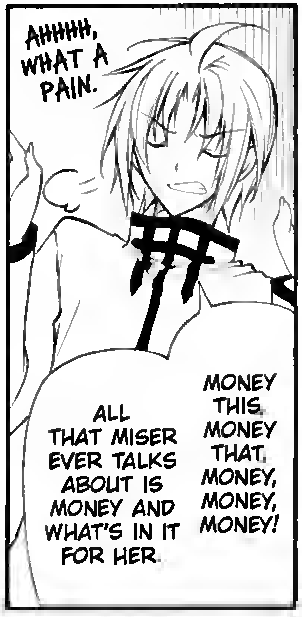

EMPLOY NAO AND THE RELIC IN THE THIRD CRUSADE TO AVOID THE TROUBLES ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIRST TWO... IS THAT IT?
I'M SURE TSUKIMIYA WILL ALSO HELP, IF YOU GIVE HER ENOUGH MONEY.
YEAH.

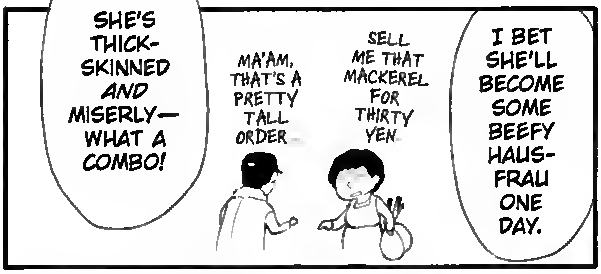

I'M THINKING OF USING IT IN THE NEXT CRUSADE.
KEH KEH KEH!
SA-TSUKI...
JUST YOU WAIT! I'M GONNA MAKE YOU EAT DIRT WITH THIS!

THE DIVINE RELICS THAT APPEAR DURING CRUSADES...
...ARE SPECIAL ITEMS THAT ONE MUST ACQUIRE TO BECOME GOD.
FIRST RELIC
GET!
SECOND RELIC
GET!
WE BOTH HOLD THE SAME NUMBER OF CRUSADE RELICS RIGHT NOW...
...BUT I AIN'T LETTIN' HIM HAVE EVEN ONE MORE!
I'M EXPECTING GOOD WORK FROM YOU TOO...
MM-HMM
... NAO.
AWW, SIR PUREBLOOD, KEEP HEAPING IT ON...
...AND I MIGHT FALL IN LOVE.
BI.
SMMM (SHUDDER)


...HAVING EXPECTATIONS IS FINE, BUT DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY.
I FEEL YOU'VE BEEN OVERWORKING HIM.
MASSAGE OVER
BUT! UNLIKE THAT OTHER MIXED-BLOOD, HE DOESN'T BACK TALK...
...AND HE'S USEFUL!


I MEAN, SHE'S BEEN ON QUITE THE LOSING STREAK, YET SHE KEEPS RAISING HER FEE.
ISN'T THAT MESSED UP?
HO HO HO!
FIFTY MIL SHOULD DO IT
A NORMAL PERSON WOULD BE ASHAMED TO ASK FOR MONEY IF SHE'D FAILED.


MONEY THIS, MONEY THAT, MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!
ALL THAT MISER EVER TALKS ABOUT IS MONEY AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR HER.
AHHHH, WHAT A PAIN.

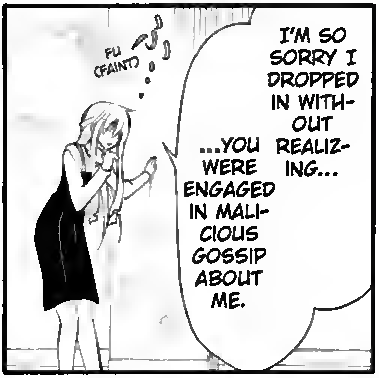

I BET SHE'LL BECOME SOME BEEFY HAUSFRAU ONE DAY.
SELL ME THAT MACKEREL FOR THIRTY YEN.
MA'AM, THAT'S A PRETTY TALL ORDER
SHE'S THICK-SKINNED AND MISERLY— WHAT A COMBO!

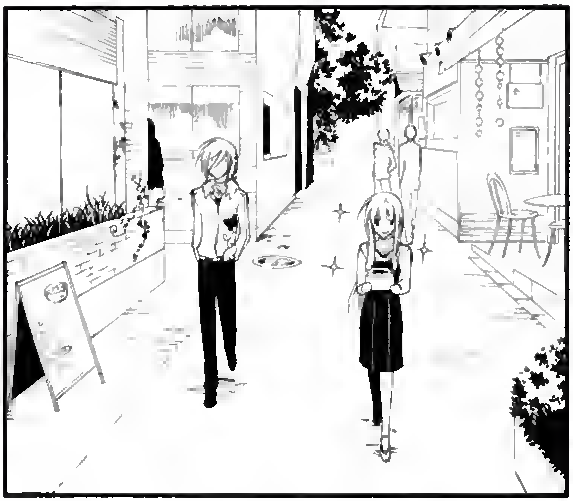
AH, WOMEN ARE FEARSOME CREATURES...
BOOB SHAPES
I BET THE SIZE OF HER BOOBS REFLECTS HER LUST FOR CASH...
I'M RIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK?
KA SURUD
THAT SHE'S THE PERSONIFICATION OF DESIRE!?

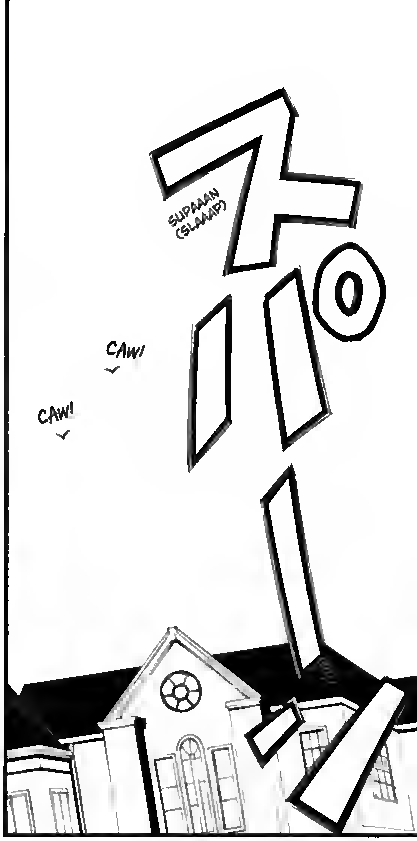
SHE'S A SNAKE DEMON WITH LUST-PACKED BOOBS...
...WHO ROBS YOU OF ALL YOUR MONEY!!
WHO'S A WHAT WITH WHAT-PACKED WHATS?

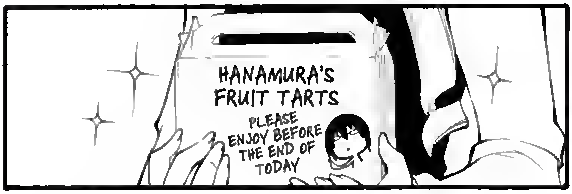
GYAAAH!!!
WAAAH! SHE HEARD ME!
Y...YOU! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE!!?
HANA-MURA-SAN TOLD ME HE'D MADE TARTS.

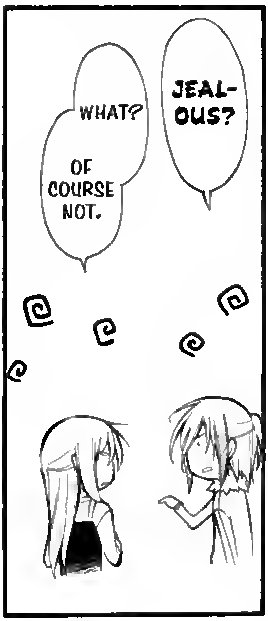
...I'LL ONLY DEAL YOU ONE SLAP.
AS AN APOL-OGY...


I'M SO SORRY I DROPPED IN WITH-OUT REALIZ-ING...
...YOU WERE ENGAGED IN MALI-CIOUS GOSSIP ABOUT ME.
FU (FAINT)

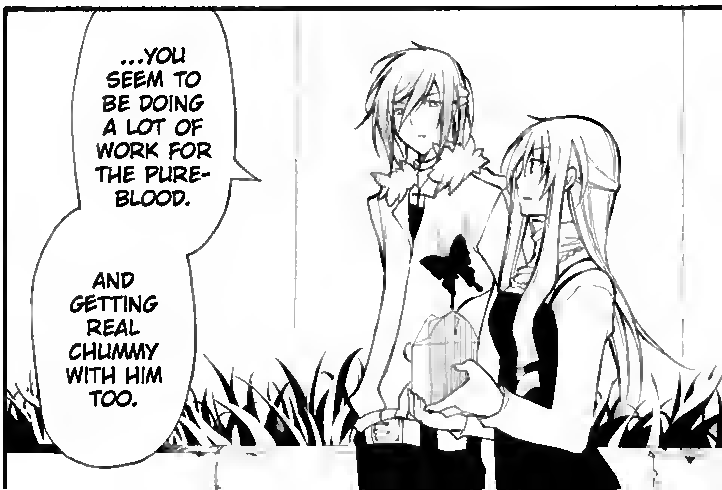


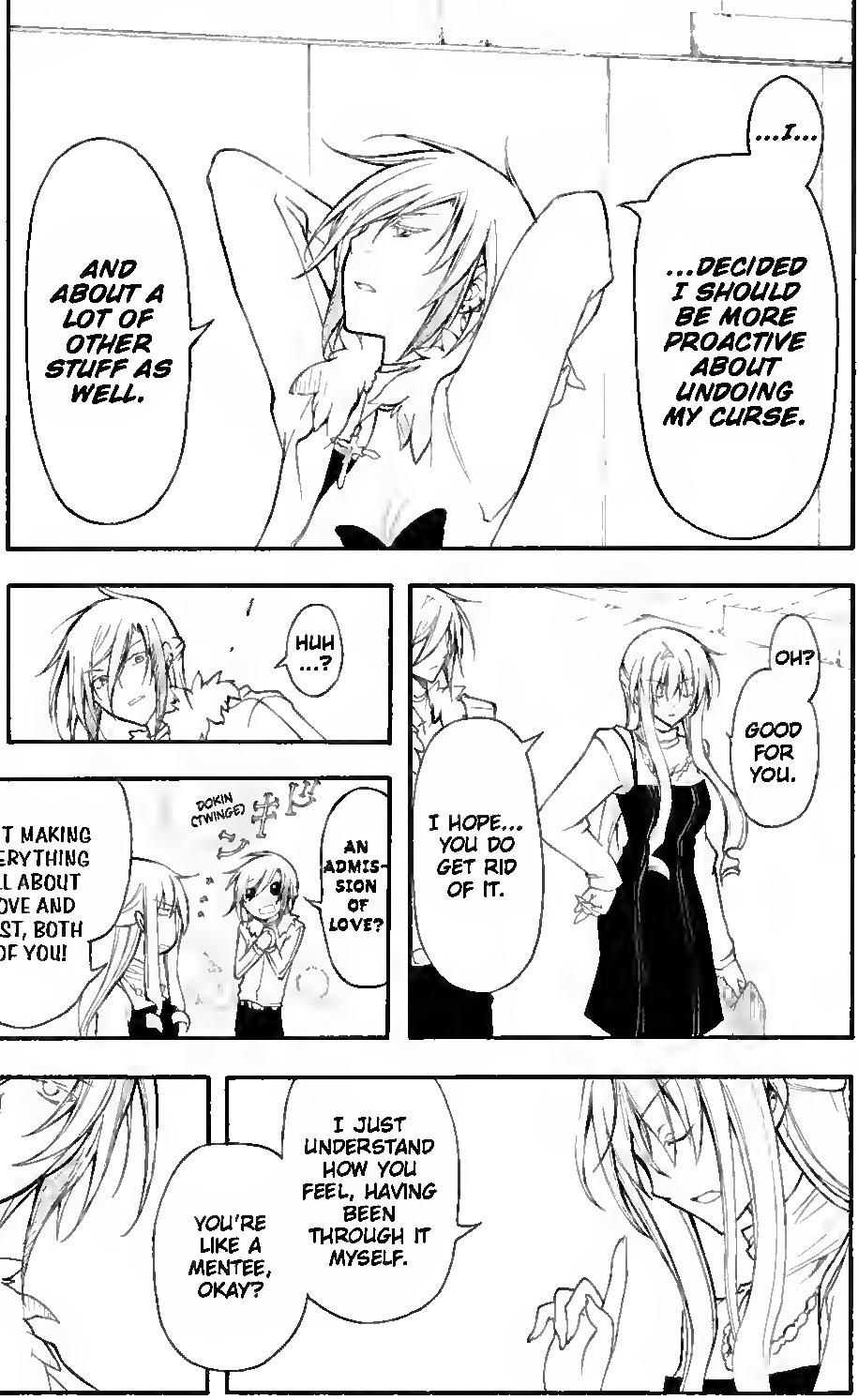

SUPAAAN (SLAAAP)
CAW!
CAW!

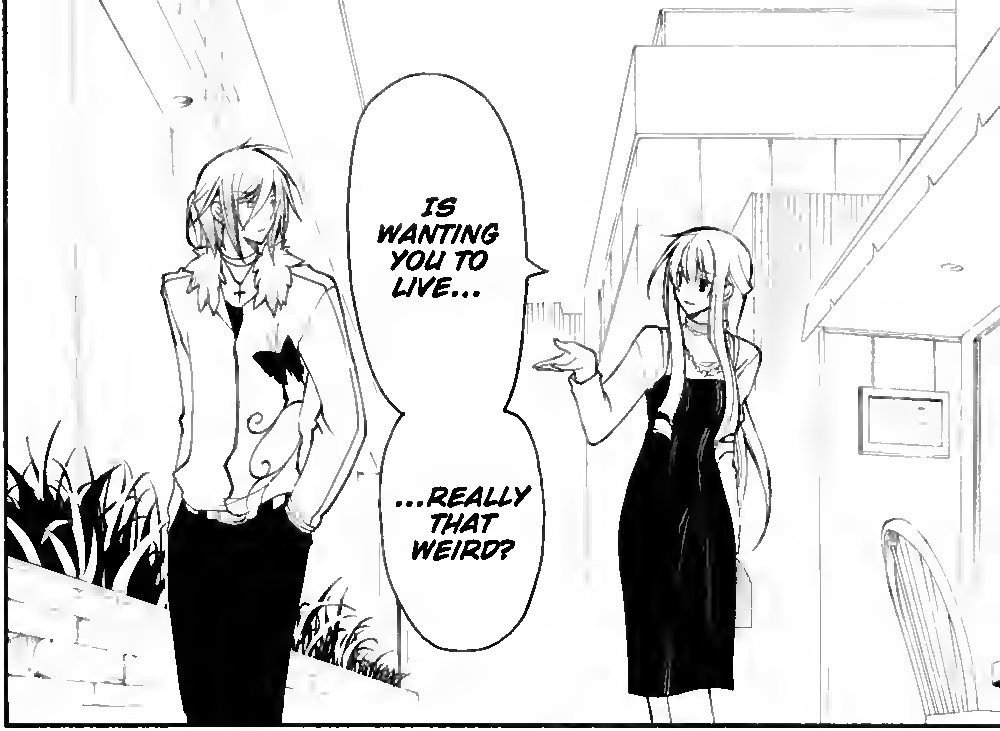

HANAMURA'S FRUIT TARTS
PLEASE ENJOY BEFORE THE END OF TODAY

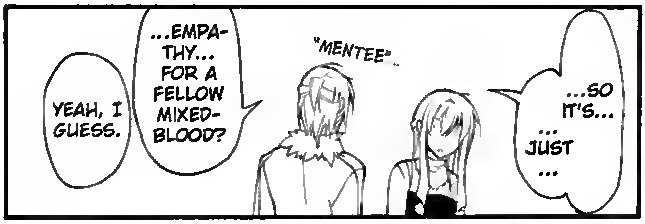

JEAL-OUS?
WHAT?
OF COURSE NOT.

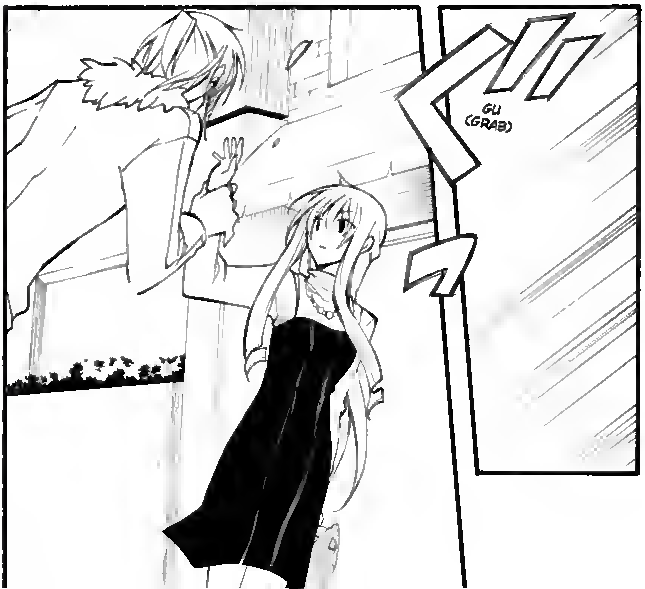
...LATE-LY...


...YOU SEEM TO BE DOING A LOT OF WORK FOR THE PURE-BLOOD.
AND GETTING REAL CHUMMY WITH HIM TOO.


...I...
...DECIDED I SHOULD BE MORE PROACTIVE ABOUT UNDOING MY CURSE.
AND ABOUT A LOT OF OTHER STUFF AS WELL.
HUH ...?
OH?
GOOD FOR YOU.
I HOPE... YOU DO GET RID OF IT.
DOKIN (TWINGE)
AN ADMISSION OF LOVE?
QUIT MAKING EVERYTHING ALL ABOUT LOVE AND LUST, BOTH OF YOU!
I JUST UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, HAVING BEEN THROUGH IT MYSELF.
YOU'RE LIKE A MENTEE, OKAY?


IS WANTING YOU TO LIVE...
...REALLY THAT WEIRD?


YEAH, I GUESS.
...EMPA-THY... FOR A FELLOW MIXED-BLOOD?
"MENTEE"..
...SO IT'S... ...JUST ...


GU (GRAB)

.....
THAT'S IT?
?
WHAT? NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU?
...GIMME A SEC. I'VE GOT A CALL.
HUH ?
WHAT THE HECK?
ARE YOU STUPID?
...!
...
...HEY!
HOW DID YOU GET THIS NUMBER!?
GAH!

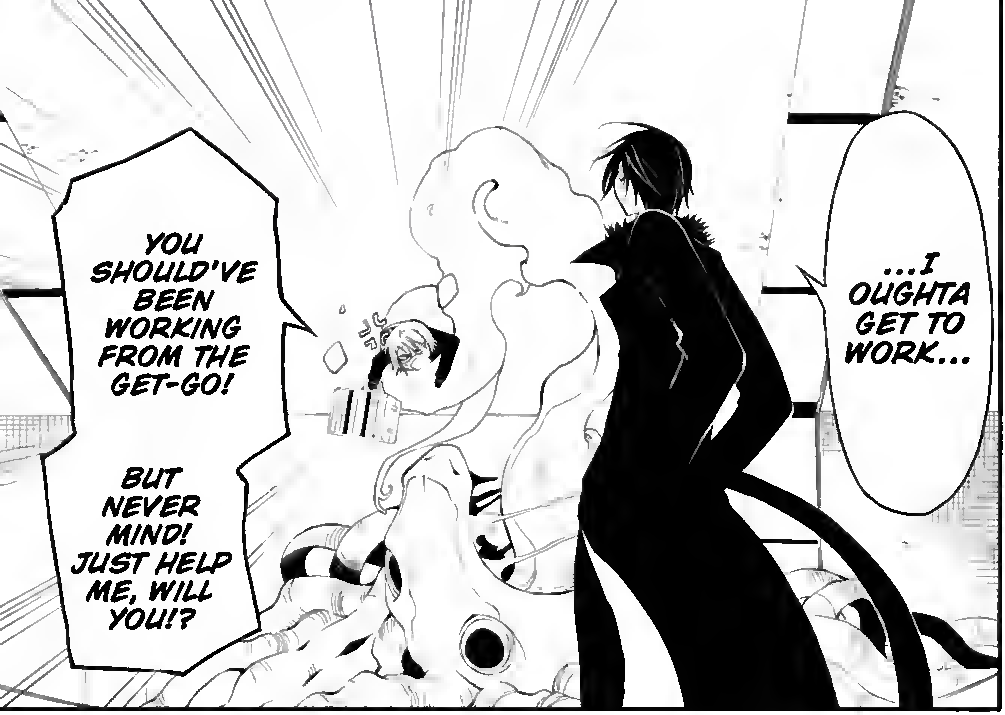
...IT'S JUST, Y'KNOW ...
...YOU WON'T ANSWER MY E-MAILS.

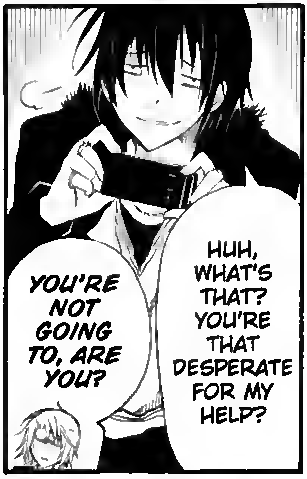
I THOUGHT I MIGHT GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE...
...ABOUT MANNERS AND ETIQUETTE.

...HAAH.
I GUESS ...

BUTSU (CLICK)
Quit sending me e-mails!
You're an enemy!

SHE'S AS ICE-COLD AS EVER. SHEESH.
...SHE HUNG UP ON ME.


...I OUGHTA GET TO WORK...
YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN WORKING FROM THE GET-GO!
BUT NEVER MIND! JUST HELP ME, WILL YOU!?


HUH, WHAT'S THAT? YOU'RE THAT DESPERATE FOR MY HELP?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO, ARE YOU?

OH MY. THAT'S TERRIBLY UNDIGNIFIED, MAKINO-KUN.
PASHA
PASHA
PASHA (FLASH)
NICE, NICE, REAL PITIFUL.
WHOO-FWOO~!
SHUT UP! DON'T TAKE PHOTOS!

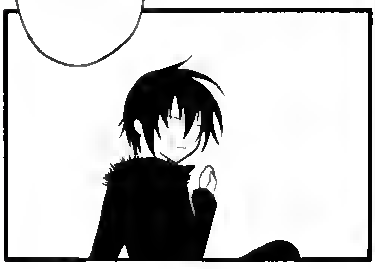
OH!
ば
(CHOMP)

GU (STRAIN)
GU
GU
GU
GU
GU
I DON'T ...
... NEED ...
... YOU.
FINE.
FOR-GET IT.

EX-PLODE!!
PAAN (POP)
GOTO (PLOP)
OW!
GOTO (CLUNK)
TH...
...THE CASE!?
AH!
.....
NO, THANK YOU!
PEI (SLAP)
NEED A HAND?

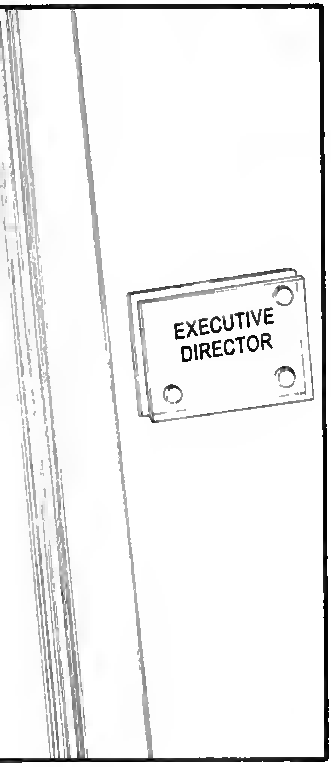
IT'D BE EMBARRASSING TO GO BACK...
...WITHOUT THE DIVINE RELIC WE MANAGED TO ACQUIRE IN HAND.
HA-HA-HA, YOU DUMMY.
I WASN'T GONNA LET YOU DIE!
POSU (WHMP)
POSU
POSU
BUT DON'T THOSE FUMES RISING FROM THE CORPSE ...
...SMELL KINDA LIKE POISON GAS?
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
YOU'VE SMELLED IT BEFORE?
YEAH, A FEW TIMES.
I SEE ...
JUUU (FZZT)
.....
...THAT DEMON ...
...WAS SUPPOSED TO ATTACK WHOEVER GRABBED THE RELIC, RIGHT?
SEEMS SO.
HU
UH?

SPELL TRANSFER



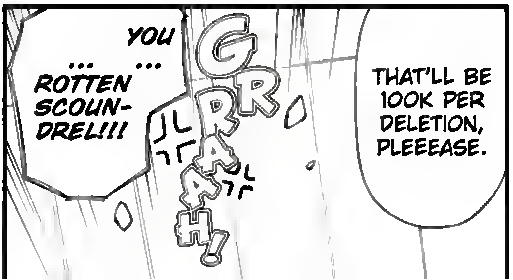
...AS HIS EXCELLENCY SURMISED...
KOFF...
...HIS ABILITIES ARE MORE USEFUL THAN WE'D ANTICIPATED...
HE WAS A BIG HELP GETTING TO THE RELIC TOO.

NO!
ERASE THEM!
ALL OF THEM!
AWW— DO I HAFTA? SAY "PRETTY PLEASE."
I THINK I'LL SEND THEM TO THE BOSS.
AAAAAGH!!!
THOSE PICS OF YOU IN THAT DEMON'S CLUTCHES ...
POCH! (BIP)
POCH!


EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P...
P-P...
PRETTY PLEASE.

NIKO (SMILE)

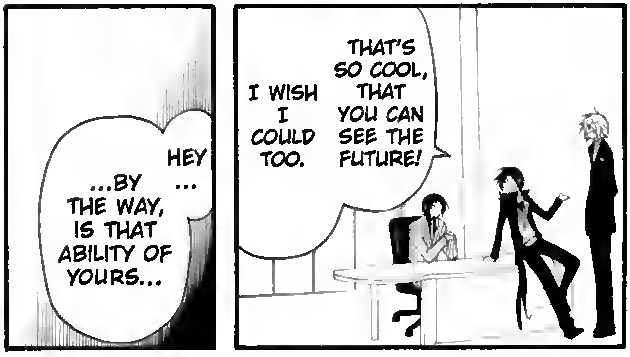

YOU ... ROTTEN SCOUN-DREL!!!
GRRRR
AAAH!
THAT'LL BE 100K PER DELETION, PLEEEASE.

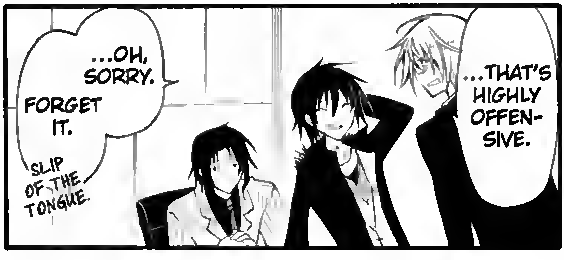
I WAS RIGHT TO SEND YOU TWO.
GOOD WORK RETRIEVING THE RELIC SAFELY.
...IT WAS ALL THANKS TO ARCANA INTEL.
GOTO (CLUNK)
ROUTE, LOCATION, KEYS— EVERY-THING ON THE RELIC.
ALMOST SICKEN-INGLY PER-FECT...
NOT ONE DETAIL MISSING OR INCOR-RECT.

...A HUMAN TRICK?

THIS RELIC WILL COME IN HANDY IN THE NEXT CRUSADE.
THANK YOU.

WOW.
YOU'RE USING IT IN THE CRUSADE? DOES THAT MEAN...
...YOU SAW IT IN ONE OF YOUR VISIONS OF THE FUTURE?


THAT'S SO COOL, THAT YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE!
I WISH I COULD TOO.
HEY ...
...BY THE WAY, IS THAT ABILITY OF YOURS...

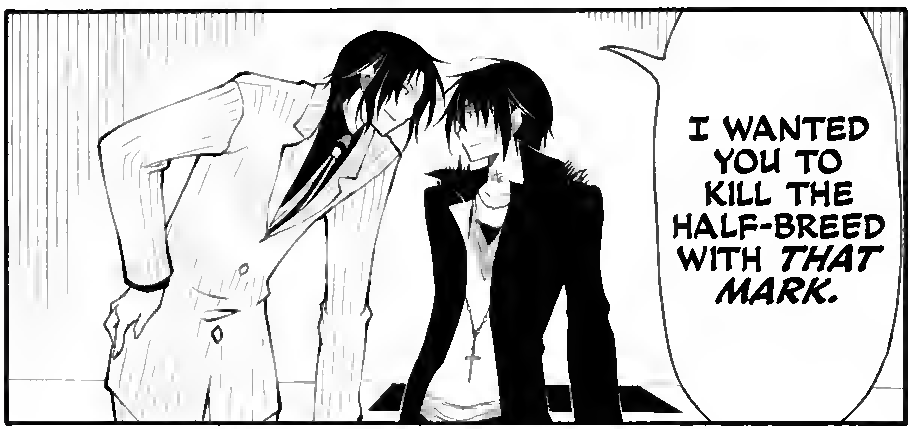

...OH, SORRY.
FORGET IT.
SLIP OF THE TONGUE
...THAT'S HIGHLY OFFENSIVE.

...THE JOB I ENTRUSTED YOU WITH LAST MONTH...
HOW DID IT GO?
...THAT REMINDS ME...

...HOW DID WHAT GO?
DID HE... JUST MOVE?

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

... HUH?


I WANTED YOU TO KILL THE HALF-BREED WITH THAT MARK.

.....
...OH, THAT.
SHE DIDN'T SHOW UP...
...WHEN WE TRIED TO LURE HER OUT.

HMM? WHAT'S THAT? SOUNDS LIKE FUUUN!

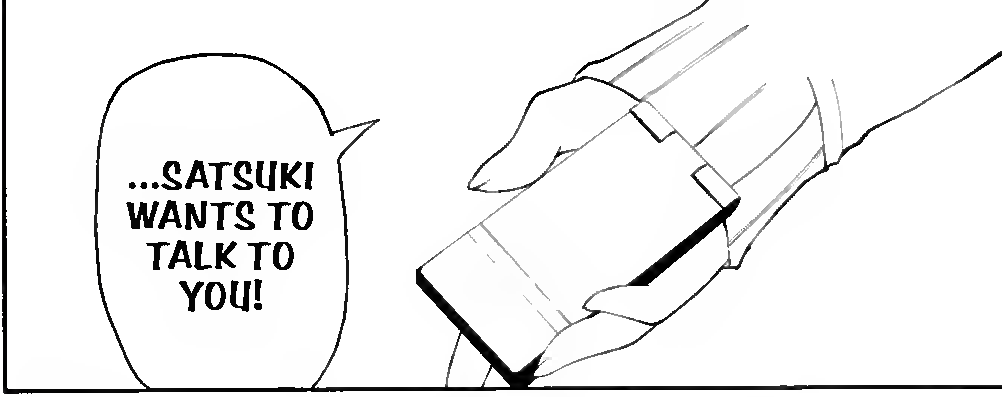
BUT ...
...NO WORRIES.
I'LL DEFINITELY GET HER ONE OF THESE DAYS.

KITTY CAT...
COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US ADVANCE NOTICE THAT YOU'RE COMING!?

SHUN (FWSH)
TELL MOMOSE TOO!

BLEH! BE QUIET, PIP-SQUEAK!
HELLO THERE.
HOW CAN WE HELP YOU TODAY?

OH!
WELL ...


...SATSUKI WANTS TO TALK TO YOU!

—...
THE CELL I GAVE MOMOSE IS SECURE.

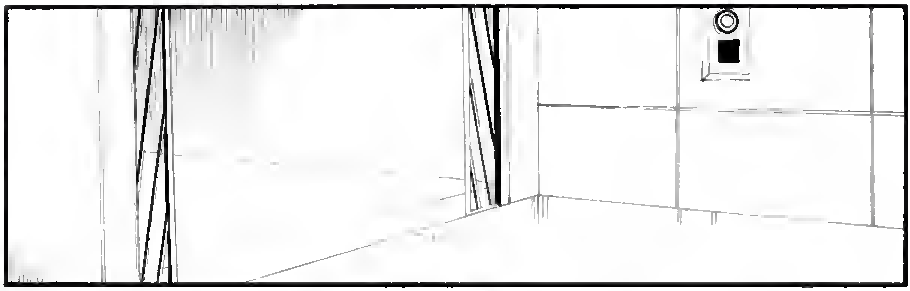
?
WHAT IS IT?

I have ...

...URGENT INFORMATION.

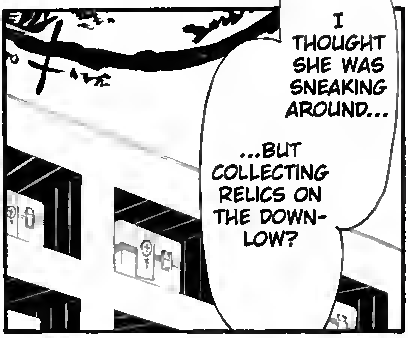
HANA-MURA!
JUST YOU? WHERE ARE THE OTHER TWO?
THEY LEFT A SHORT WHILE AGO.
... TCH.
WHAT LOUSY TIMING.
WELL... IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
A NEW ORACLE WAS JUST DELIV-ERED.
THE NEXT CRUSADE IS COMING.
TWO DAYS FROM NOW AT MIDNIGHT...

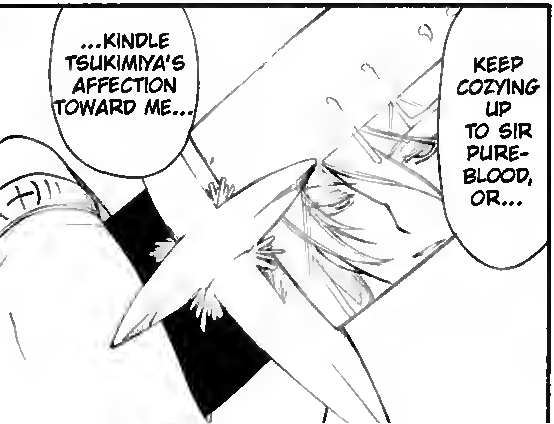
...THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH OF GOD'S RELICS WILL APPEAR SIMULTA-NEOUSLY.

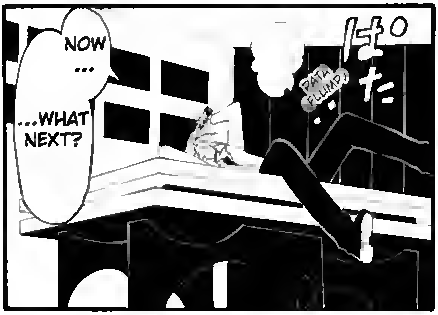


CAN'T UNDER ESTIMATE YOU, HUH?
I'M LIKING YOU MORE AND MORE.

...HMM...


I THOUGHT SHE WAS SNEAKING AROUND...
...BUT COLLECTING RELICS ON THE DOWN-LOW?

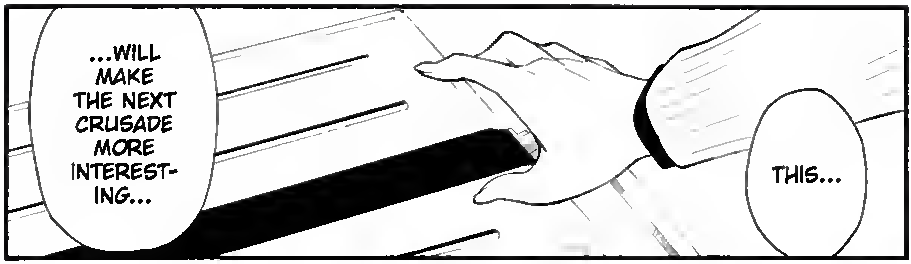

...KINDLE TSUKIMIYA'S AFFECTION TOWARD ME...
KEEP COZYING UP TO SIR PURE-BLOOD, OR...

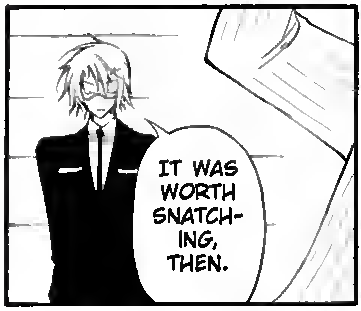

NOW...
...WHAT NEXT?
ぼふっ
FWUMP

...OR...

...THE PROGRESSION OF THE CRUSADE IS ALTERING, LITTLE BY LITTLE.

THANKS TO OUR MED-DLING...
...BEHIND THE GOD CANDI-DATES' BACKS.

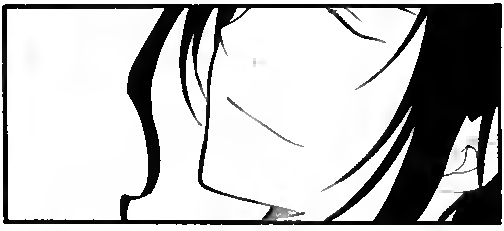

...WILL MAKE THE NEXT CRUSADE MORE INTEREST-ING...
THIS...

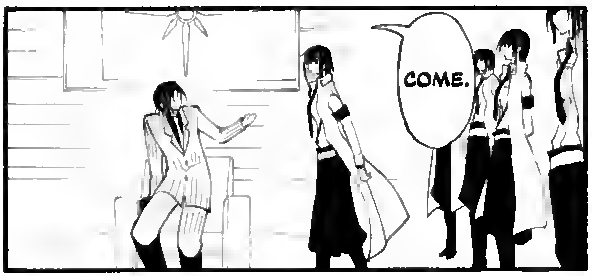

IT WAS WORTH SNATCH-ING, THEN.

...SINCE IT'S A RELIC...
...THAT DOESN'T APPEAR IN THE NEXT CRUSADE.

SO YOU'RE ABLE TO WARP THE FUTURE...
...BY PUTTING THAT INTO PLAY.

KATSU-(TAK)



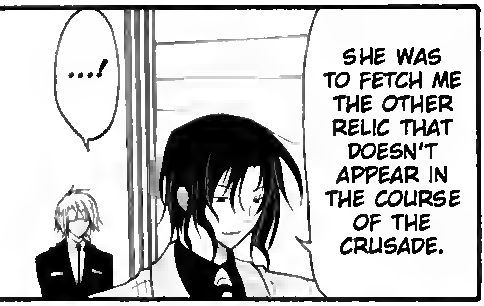


NOTE. KUKI MEANS "NINE PRINCESSES."

KARI
(BITE)

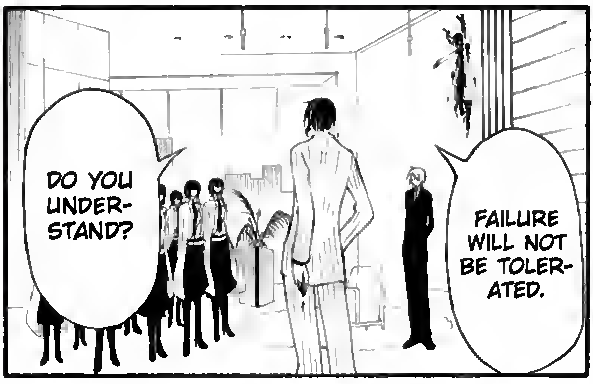
GOKU
GOOD GIRL.
GOKU

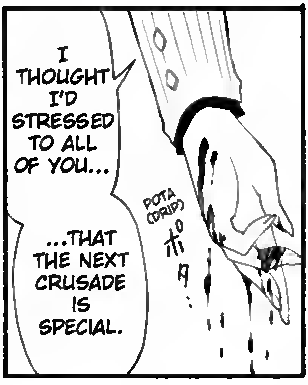
GOKUN
(GULP)
ごくん・・

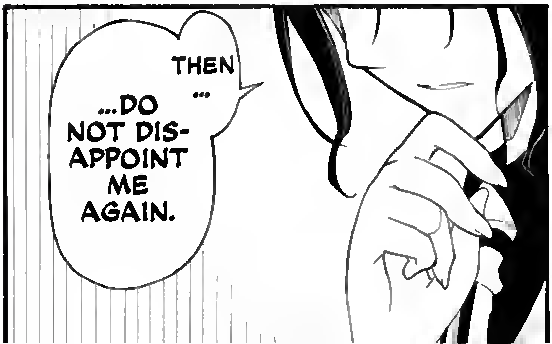

...!
SHE WAS TO FETCH ME THE OTHER RELIC THAT DOESN'T APPEAR IN THE COURSE OF THE CRUSADE.

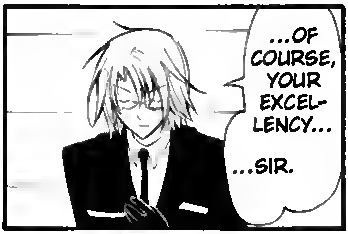
GOKU
GOKU
MM...
THE PUREBLOOD ANGEL SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN TO IT FIRST...
...UH...
ABOUT THAT...

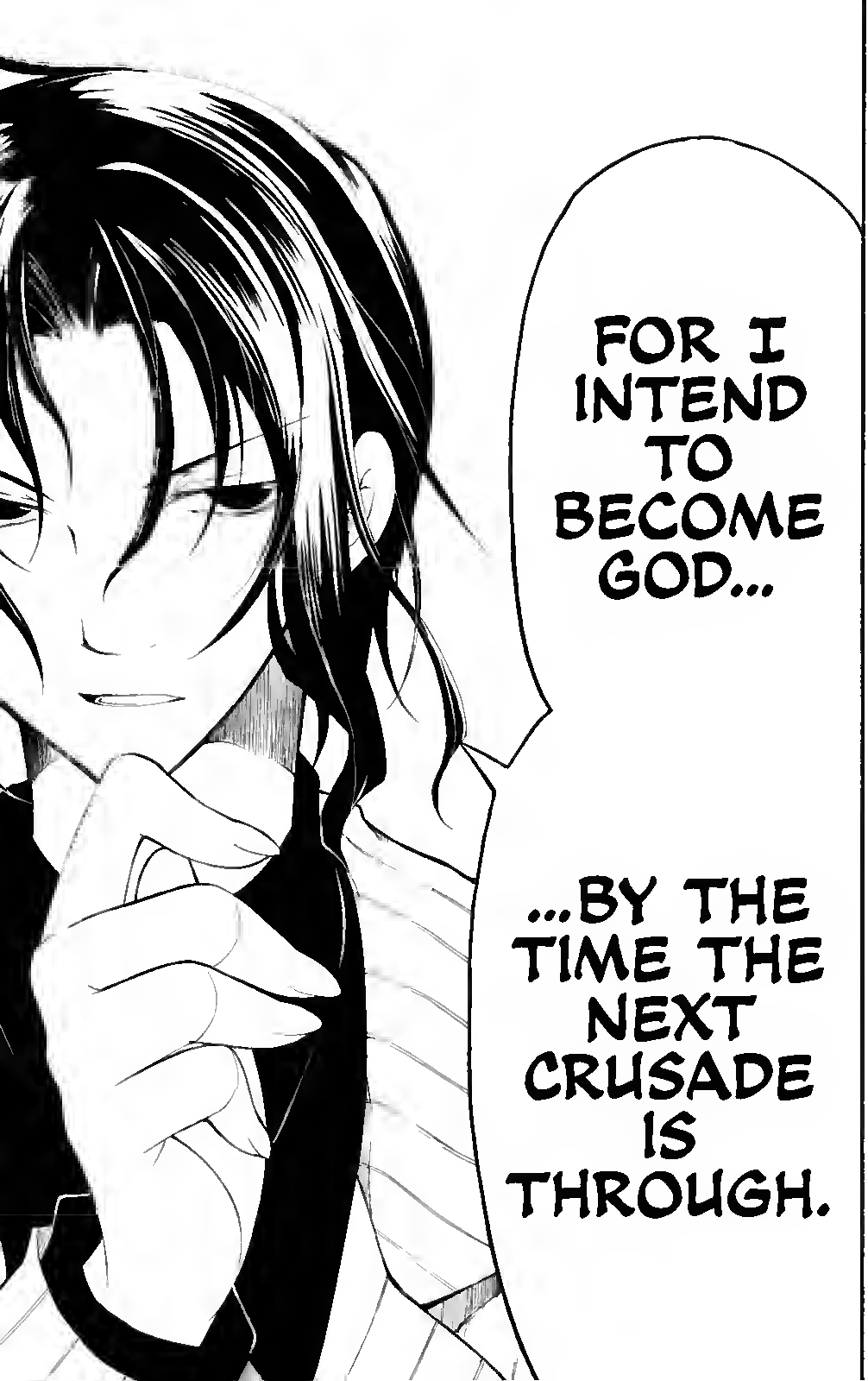
...!!


DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
FAILURE WILL NOT BE TOLER-ATED.


I THOUGHT I'D STRESSED TO ALL OF YOU...
...THAT THE NEXT CRUSADE IS SPECIAL.
POTA (DRIP)


THEN ...
...DO NOT DIS-APPOINT ME AGAIN.

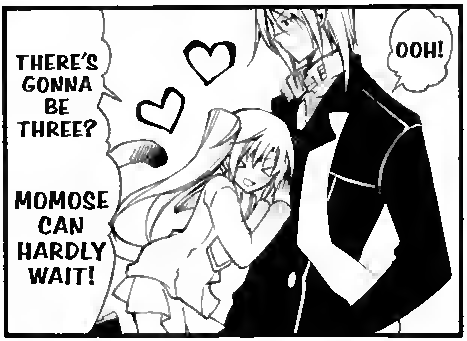

...OF COURSE, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
...SIR.


FOR I INTEND TO BECOME GOD...
...BY THE TIME THE NEXT CRUSADE IS THROUGH.

BLOODY CROSS

ALMOST MIDNIGHT.

THE MOMENT WHEN THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH RELICS WILL APPEAR.


OOH!
THERE'S GONNA BE THREE?
MOMOSE CAN HARDLY WAIT!

HEE HEE!
HEE HEE!
MAKE THEM ALL YOURS, SATSUKI! ♡

...OH, IT'S YOU.
—...
HELLO?
ピッ
PI (BEEP)

I JUST NEED TO GRAB THE DIVINE RELIC...
...AND BRING IT TO YOU, RIGHT?

I KNOW.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY.
I'M ON IT.

...DO YOU SEE IT?
... HEY ...

Chapter 18
The Crusade à Trois

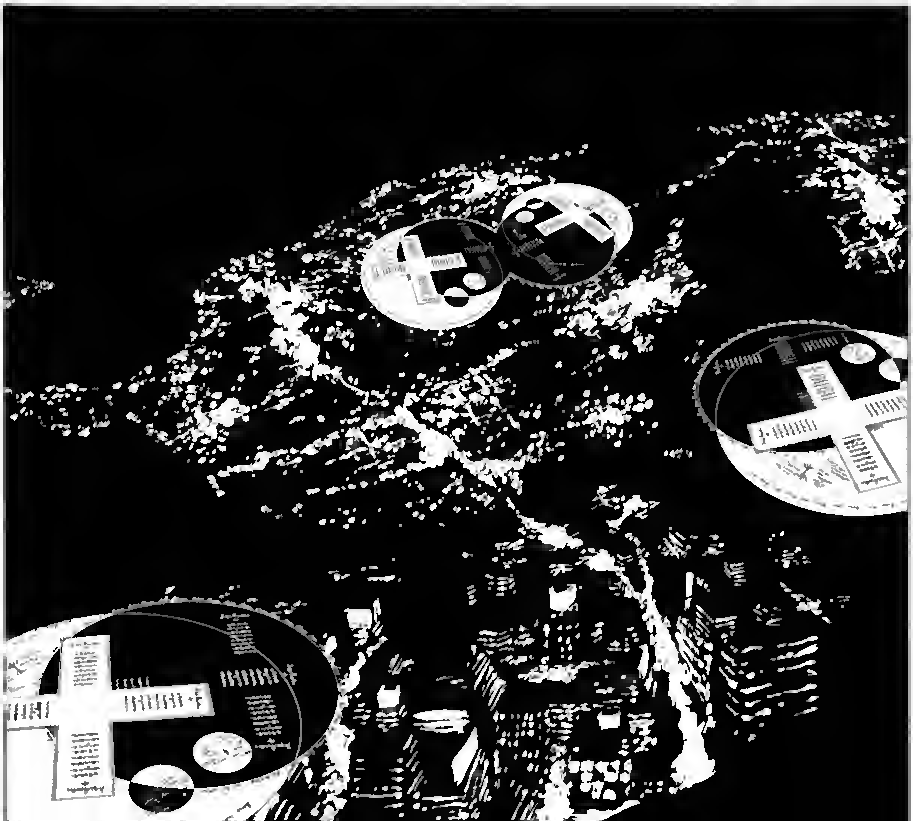
...EVERYONE...
...HAVE YOU MEMORIZED THE EMERGENCE POINTS?
...NOW, THEN...
THREE RELICS WILL APPEAR SIMULTANEOUSLY TONIGHT.
IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT TO SECURE ALL THREE...
...BUT WE'RE GOING TO DO IT.
HUH?
IT MEANS THE FOUR OF US WILL NEED TO SPLIT INTO THREE TEAMS.
OH?
GOING AFTER ALL OF THEM IS PRETTY RASH.

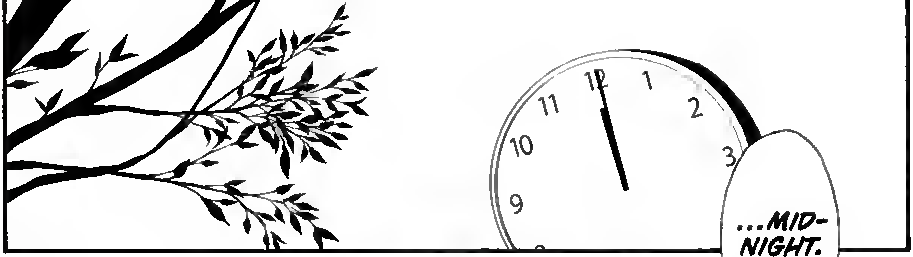
THEY EXCEED US IN BATTLE STRENGTH AS WELL AS NUMBERS.
...WHILE THE OTHER SIDE ALSO INCLUDES THOSE ARCANA GUYS.
BESIDES WHICH, THERE'S ONLY FOUR OF US...
BAD
ZAKU (SLICE)
...IT'LL BE GAME OVER REAL QUICK... AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ALL OF THEM.
IF ONE OF THE LONERS RUNS INTO THE FALLEN ANGEL...
IF WE WERE CONFRONTING THEM HEAD-ON, THAT'D BE STUPID, NOT JUST RASH.
WELL, YEAH.
FOR SURE.
SO ... ...WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU CALL IT BUT "RASH"?
HEY, AS SOON AS THE CRUSADE'S OVER, I'M TOSSING YOU TWO INTO THE SEA.
...QUITE A SURPRISE, REALLY.
...THIS TIME, HE'S ACTUALLY PREPARED A PLAN.
WHAT ...? SHOCKING!
MY MASTER MAY BE A SLOW-WITTED APE, BUT...
?
DON'T WORRY.
PON (PAT)
THUS...
...WOULD ALLOW THE ENEMY TAKE THE OTHER TWO...
BUT FOCUSING ALL FOUR OF US ON ONE RELIC...
I DON'T INTEND TO DIE A FOOLISH POINTLESS DEATH EITHER

DON
...TSUKIMIYA AND I WILL GO TO THE THIRD RELIC...
...AND HANAMURA AND NAO WILL GO FOR THE FOURTH RELIC.
DON (BOOM)
DODON
FIRST...
...WE'LL NAB TWO OF 'EM!
THEY'RE ODD PAIRINGS, BUT...
...IT'S NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THE FALLEN ANGEL.
TO BE FRANK... ...TSUZUKI IS THE ONLY ONE WHO IS SATSUKI'S EQUAL...

AND SO, DEFENSELESS NAO AND I WILL BRING ALONG...
...THIS ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL DIVINE RELIC...
...TO EVEN THE PLAYING FIELD.
BUT IF WE CAN GRAB THE OTHER TWO FIRST...
...THEY'LL BE PISSED TO HAVE RETRIEVED ONLY ONE...
...AND COME AFTER US FOR NUMBERS THREE AND FOUR...
GREEDY BASTARDS...
.....
...THE FIFTH RELIC...
...WILL LIKELY FALL INTO ENEMY HANDS.
SO...
...WHEN THAT HAP-PENS...
...WE'LL GRAB THE FIFTH RELIC... AND VOILÀ.

ALL THREE OF THEM...
...MUST BE OBTAINED.
DON'T MESS UP.




...MID-NIGHT.

THE THREE RELICS ARE STARTING TO APPEAR.

...AND REMEMBER...
...OH...
ZHI QUOD
NO SLACKING OR RELENTING.
CRUSADE RELICS ARE SPECIAL.

...ROGER.
WE'LL HAVE TO SPLIT UP.
THE THIRD RELIC WILL MANIFEST INSIDE THIS PARK IN TWO PIECES.

YOU'D BETTER NOT FAIL.

...I WON'T GET PAID IF I DO.
...LOOKS LIKE...

TA (DASH)

TO (TAP)

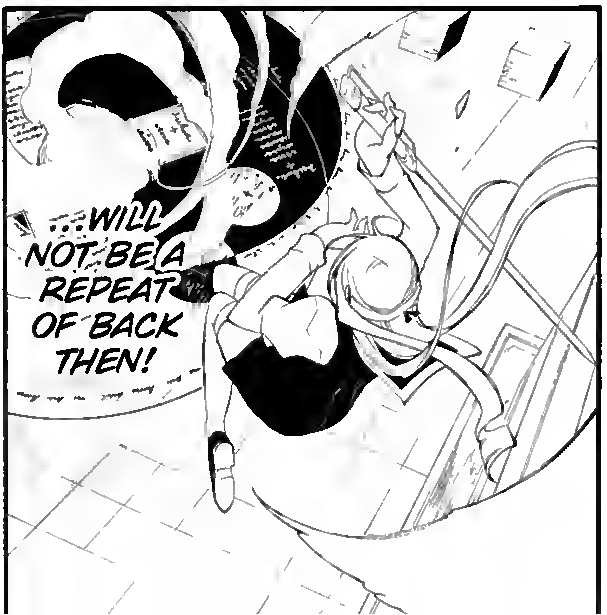
"FALLEN ANGEL"...
"GOD'S RELICS!"
"CRUSADE."

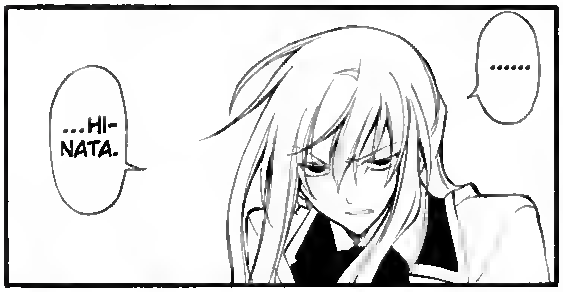
ALL IT STIRS UP...
...IS THE RAGE I FELT AT MY HELP-LESSNESS AND LACK OF POWER...

A LIVING SACRI-FICE.
AND NOW...
...A NEW GOD SHALL BE BORN!

TAN (THMP)

BA (LEAP)
TONIGHT...


...WILL NOT BE A REPEAT OF BACK THEN!


.....
...HI-NATA.

OH, IT'S YOU.
HM?
WELL, IF IT ISN'T OUR OLD FRIEND.

...?

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN...
...HIS EXCELLENCY'S ORDERS?
NOT AT ALL.

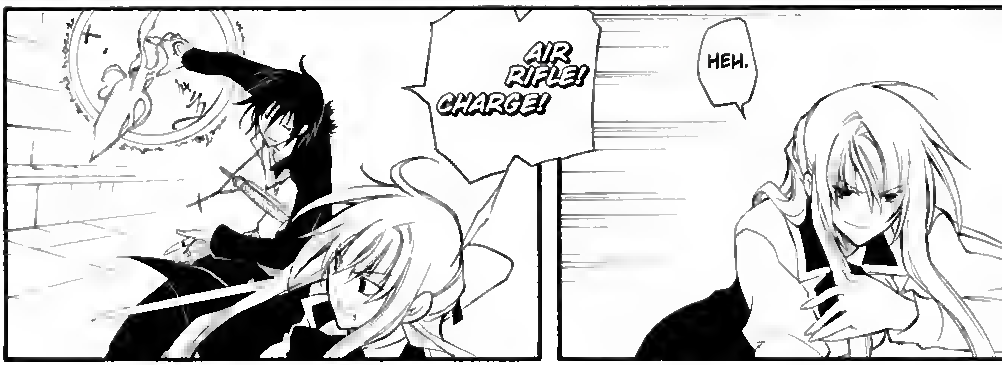
HOW FORTUNATE.
SAVED US THE TROUBLE OF LOOKING FOR YOU.

"KILL THE BEARER OF THE MARK"...
...RIGHT?

...OH?
SOUNDS LIKE A TERRIBLE ORDER TO ME.

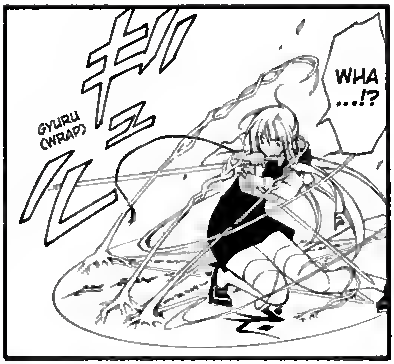
ン
=OM=
DOSU (SHP)
DOSU
BA (FINISH)
DOSU
STIMU-LATE!
O BLOOD ...
...READY ME A SWORD.
ZU (SWING)

HERE I COME.
GU (GRIP)
SYU (WHOOSH)
DENY AT-TAIN—
TOO LATE.
TCH!
DOSU (SHINK)
!!
DOSU


AIR RIFLE! CHARGE!
HEH.

DAM-MIT...!
DOO DOO
!!

THEY WON'T HIT ME.
ZAA (WHISH)
WELL ... THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
SINCE THIS RELIC WAS MY REAL TARGET.


GYURU (WRAP)
WHA ...!?

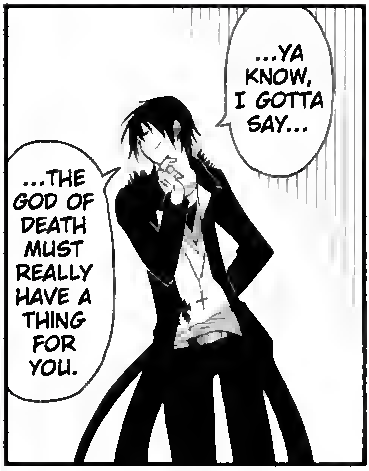
PARI (CRACKLE)

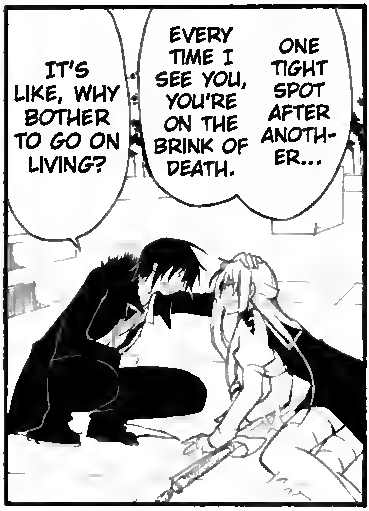
DO (THUD)

HEH HEH...
SORRY.
...NOW, THEN— HOW SHALL I FINISH YOU?

I SET A TRAP THAT WOULD SPRING ...
...IF YOU GRABBED THE RELIC.

YOU WORKED SO HARD TO UNDO YOUR CURSE, EVEN TO THE POINT OF RELYING ON DIVINE POWER...
HOW SAD IT'S COME TO THIS.


...YA KNOW, I GOTTA SAY...
...THE GOD OF DEATH MUST REALLY HAVE A THING FOR YOU.

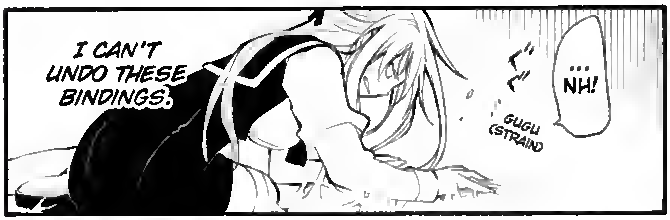

ONE TIGHT SPOT AFTER ANOTH-ER...
EVERY TIME I SEE YOU, YOU'RE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH.
IT'S LIKE, WHY BOTHER TO GO ON LIVING?

BOOM
KABOOM

...A CALL FOR BACK-UP.
HMPH.
WHY DON'T YOU GO?
WE CAN'T IGNORE IT.

PIPIPI (BEEP)
ピピピ
...?
THAT'S WHERE THE OTHER PIECE OF THE THIRD RELIC IS...

I CAN MAN-AGE...
...TO WRAP THINGS UP HERE.


I CAN'T UNDO THESE BINDINGS.
GUGU (STRAIN)
... NH!

YOU'D BETTER KILL HER.
.....
ZAA (WOOSH)

...TAKING PART IN THE CRUSADE 'COS YOU NEED MONEY, RIGHT?
YOU ARE ...
...THINGS WILL GO EXACTLY THE SAME AS LAST TIME...!

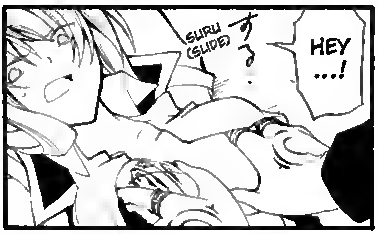
VUN (WISH)
HEY..
AT THIS RATE...

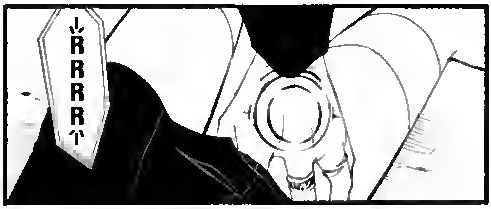
PRETTY CHEEKY, TO BE FREED FROM YOUR CURSE...
PU (POP)
...YET STILL MEDDLE WITH DIVINE POWER FOR SUCH SHALLOW REASONS.
AND GOD'S PUNISH-MENT FOR THAT DEPRAV-ITY...
PITA (SHAP)
PITA
...IS THIS.
HEH...
SERVES YOU RIGHT.
PAN (SLAP)
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LOOK DOWN ON ME.
...YOU'RE SO UNCUTE.

DO (SLAM)

REIN-FORCE BIND-INGS.
GU (SHOVE)

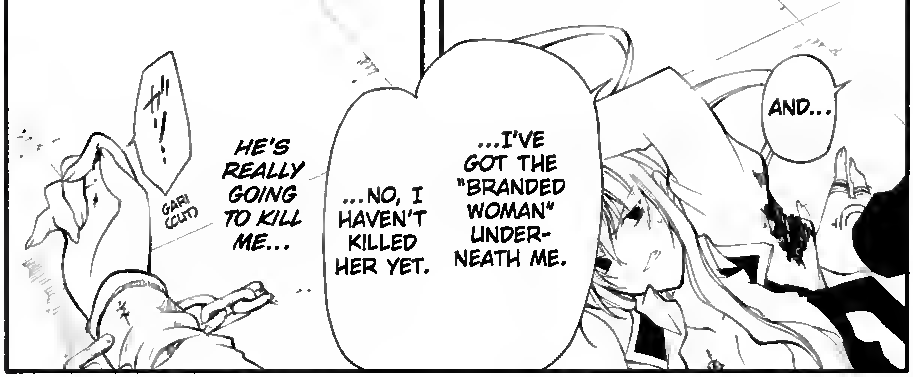
YOU DON'T SEEM TO GET IT...


SURU (SLIDE)
HEY ...!


↓RRRR↑

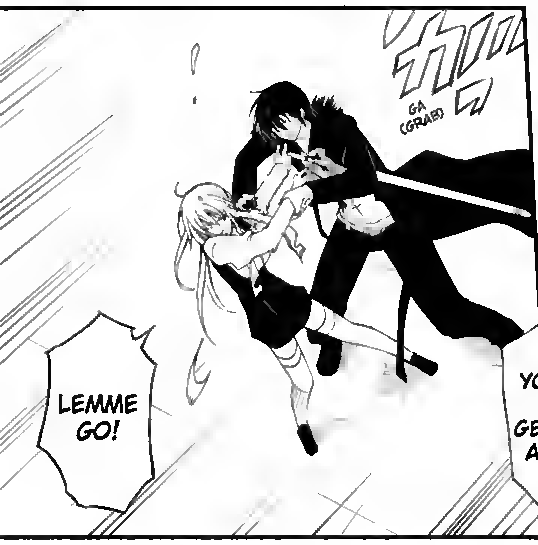
...YOU OUGHT TO BE BEG-GING ME FOR YOUR LIFE.
IN YOUR POSI-TION...

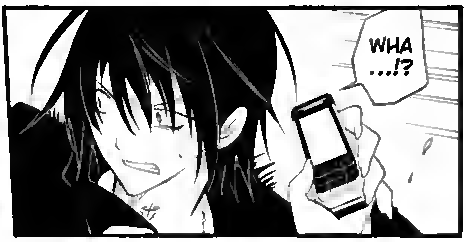
I'VE ALREADY ACQUIRED THE THIRD RELIC.
... HEYA.
(BEEP)
.....

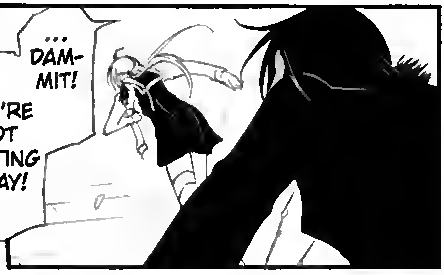

AND...
...I'VE GOT THE "BRANDED WOMAN" UNDER-NEATH ME.
...NO, I HAVEN'T KILLED HER YET.
HE'S REALLY GOING TO KILL ME...
GAH! (CUT)

GOA (CRWOOM)

I'LL...
...PUT HER ON...

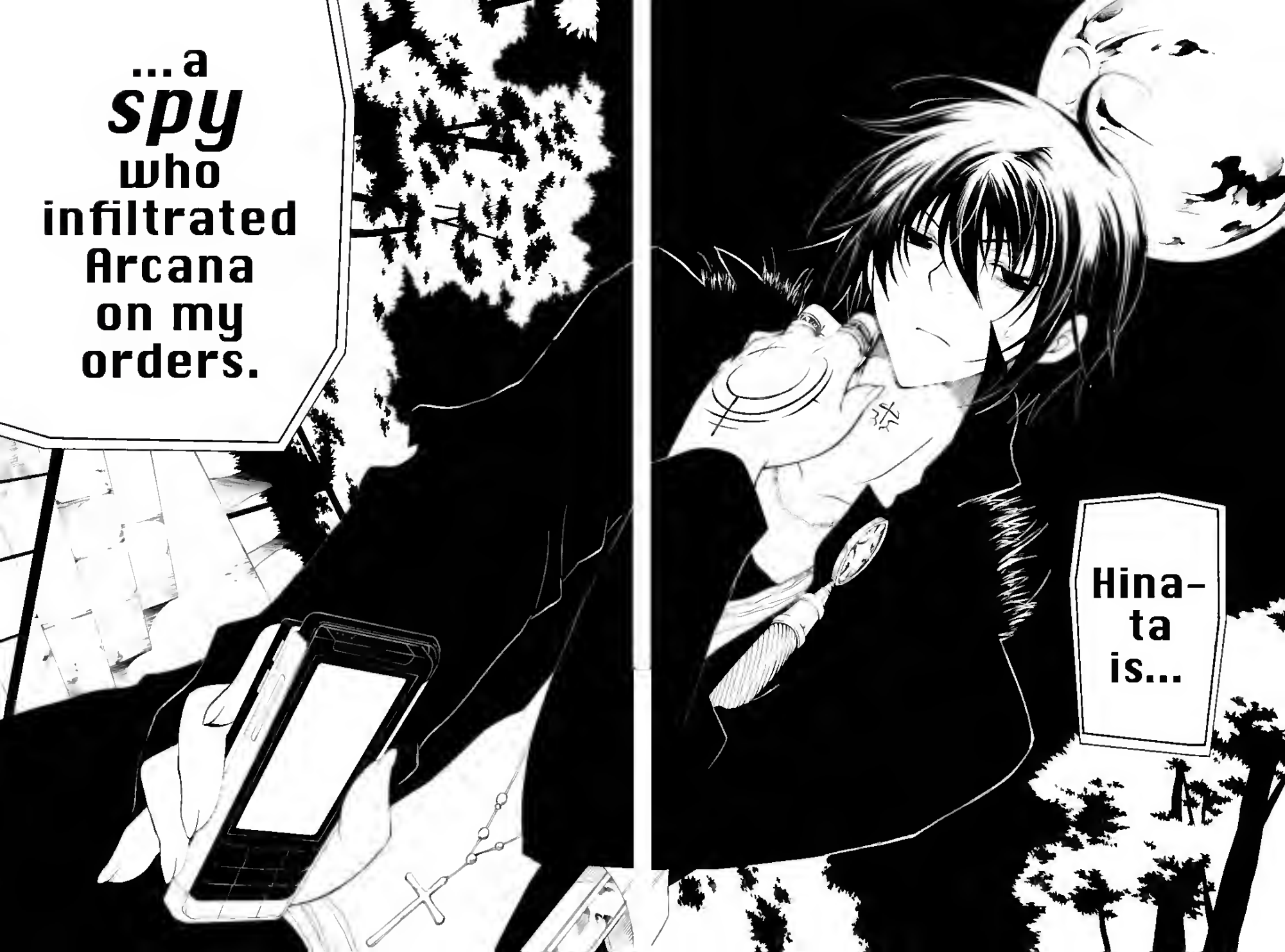

GA (GRAB)
LEMME GO!


WHA ...!?


... DAM-MIT!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!

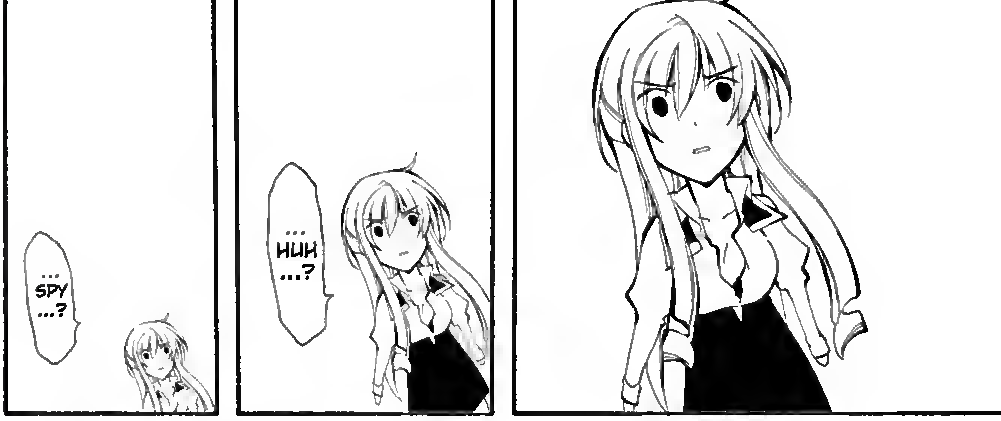
GABU (BITE)
IS THAT A JOKE!?
OF ALL PEOPLE...
...I REFUSE TO LET YOU KILL ME!!
BA (LUNGE)
OW...
...YEOW!!
JUST LISTEN TO THIS!!

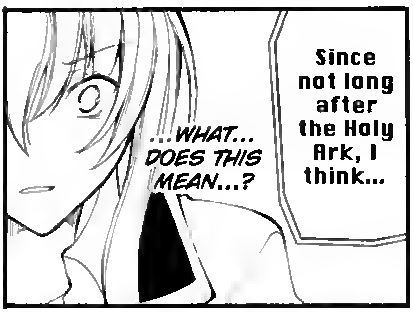
Hey, partner.
Sounds like things are going just great for Team Angel on your end!
HELLO? YOU STILL THERE?
TO-BE SUPREME RULER AND FUTURE GOD LORD TSUZUKI HERE!
THE THIRD RELIC APPEARS TO BE TWIN SWORDS.
WAIT, DON'T TELL ME YOU STILL HADN'T CAUGHT ON?
SO DENSE.


...a spy who infiltrated Arcana on my orders.
Hina-ta is...

Hina-
ta
is...

...a
spy
who
infiltrated
Arcana
on my
orders.


...SPY...?
...HUH...?

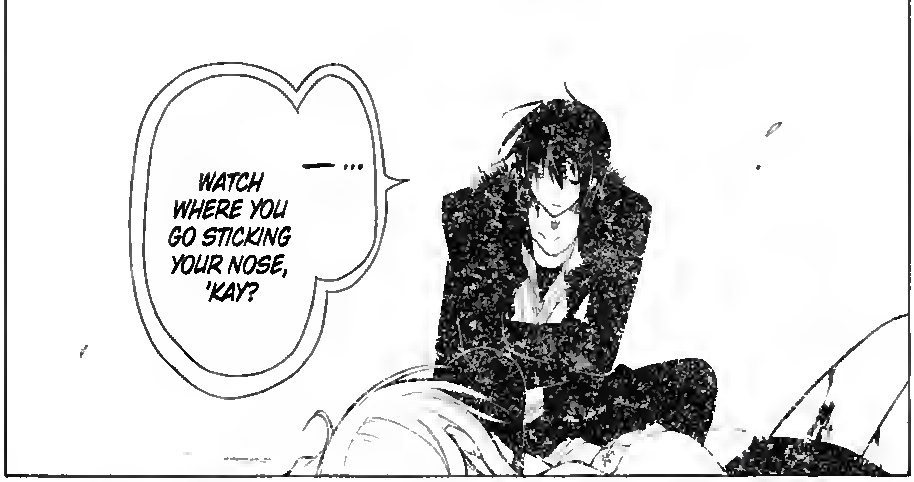

...WHAT... DOES THIS MEAN...?
Since not long after the Holy Ark, I think...

HUH?
LIKE I SAID, HE'S A SPY...
.....Say wha...!?

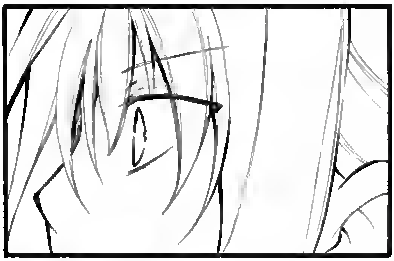
SLEEP WELL?
I MEAN, THAT OTHER DAY TOO...
...HE DECEIVED ME—HE TRIED TO SACRIFICE ME!
WE NEED A LIVING SACRIFICE.
YOU, THAT IS.

NO WAY... SO WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW...?.. HE REALLY WAS TRYING TO KILL ME...!
HE'S AN ALLY..... NOT AN ENEMY?

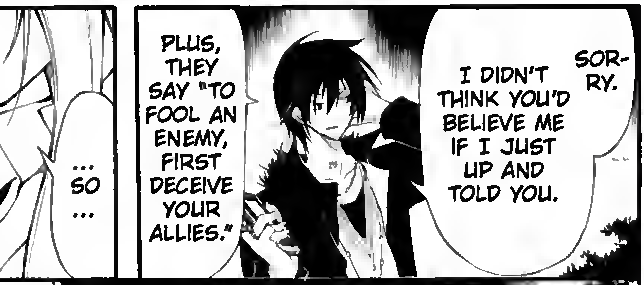
— I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
I HAD TO PUT ON AN ACT UNTIL THE PUREBLOOD GOT RID OF MAKINO.


— ...
WATCH WHERE YOU GO STICKING YOUR NOSE, 'KAY?

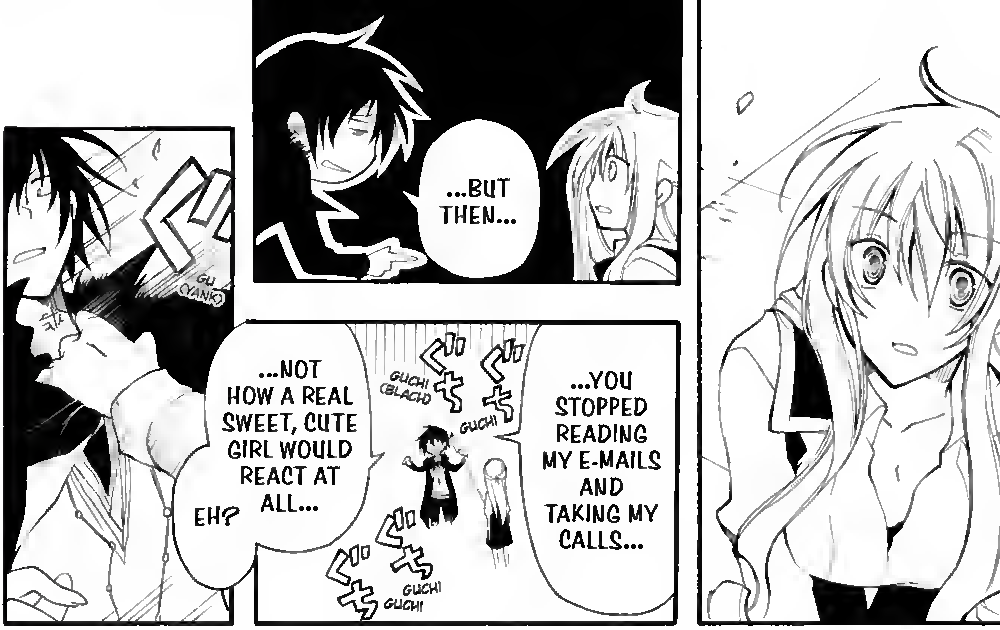
I'LL TELL YOU HOW TO GET OUT
Reply
OK
Menu

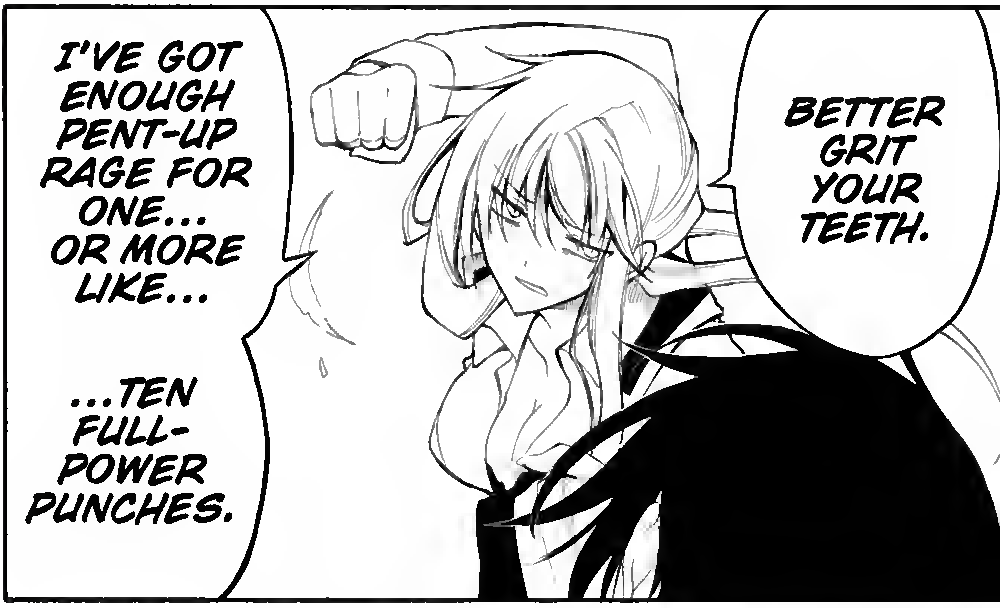


...LAST TIME, WHEN YOU STARTED OFFERING ME AS A SACRI-FICE...


...
SO ...
PLUS, THEY SAY "TO FOOL AN ENEMY, FIRST DECEIVE YOUR ALLIES."
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BELIEVE ME IF I JUST UP AND TOLD YOU.
SOR-RY.

I'M GLAD YOU GOT OUT OF THAT ONE ALIVE.
OH, THAT.

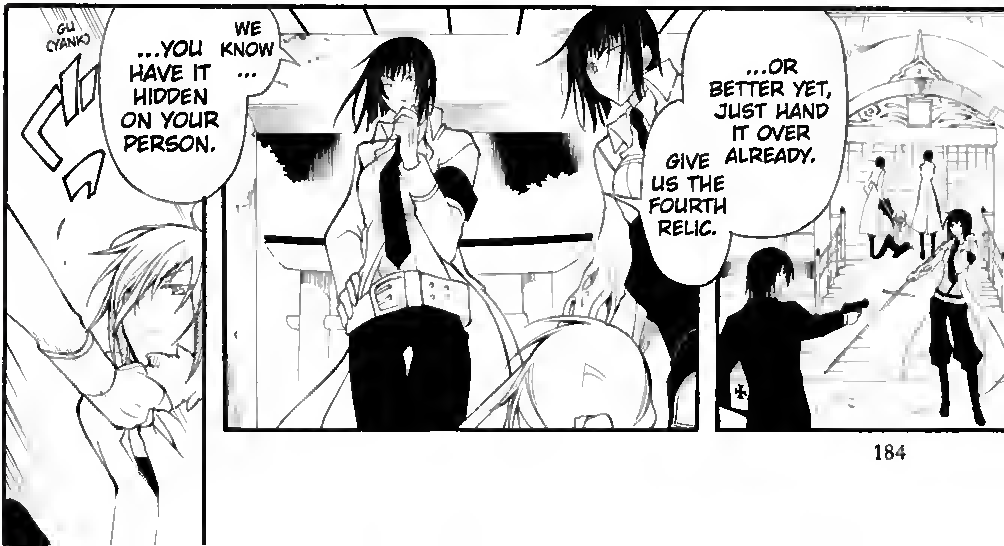

...BUT THEN...
GU GUNG
...NOT HOW A REAL SWEET, CUTE GIRL WOULD REACT AT ALL...
EH?
GUCHI GUCHI
GUCHI GUCHI
GUCHI
...YOU STOPPED READING MY E-MAILS AND TAKING MY CALLS...


I'VE GOT ENOUGH PENT-UP RAGE FOR ONE... OR MORE LIKE...
...TEN FULL-POWER PUNCHES.
BETTER GRIT YOUR TEETH.

...
HUH?

...THE THIRD RELIC ...
...IS OURS.
GO (WHAM)
GA (BAM)
PAAN (SLAP)
GUSHA (CRUNCH)
BAKI (SNAP)
DOGA (SLAM)
...IN ANY CASE, THAT'S ONE DOWN...
HEH
PI (BEEP)

GA (SLAM)
TWO AGAINST THREE...
IT'S NOT STARTING TO WEAR YOU DOWN?
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE UP?


GU (YANK)
...YOU HAVE IT HIDDEN ON YOUR PERSON.
WE KNOW ...
GIVE US THE FOURTH RELIC.
...OR BETTER YET, JUST HAND IT OVER ALREADY.

I THINK IT'D BE WISER FOR YOU TO GIVE IT TO US...
...BEFORE WE KILL THE BOTH OF YOU.
...
TO BE PRESSURED BY A BUNCH OF BEAUTIES ISN'T SUCH A BAD THING...
...BUT...

...I CAN ACTUALLY APPLY PRESSURE PRETTY WELL MYSELF.
(WHOOSH)

GYURU (WRAP)
...!!

SORRY, BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU LADIES TO LEAVE.
...I ALSO HAVE A THING AGAINST ASSAULTING WOMEN.
AND WHILE I DON'T WANT TO GIVE YOU THE RELIC...

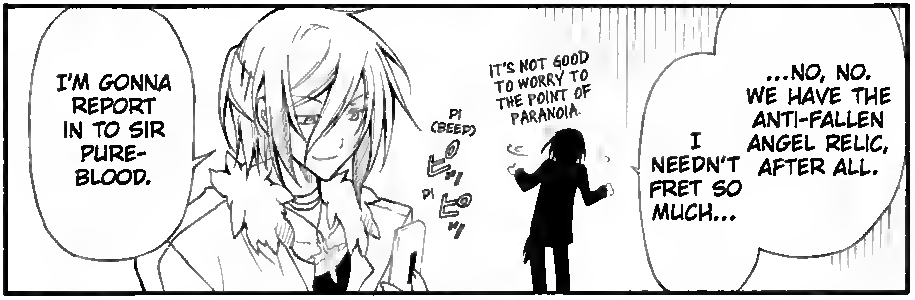
KAAA CHHOOSHO
FORCED TRANS-FER.

OINK! OINK!
OH!
...YES, INDEED.
THANKS TO YOU.
YOU OKAY, HANA-MURA-SAN?
WHEW.
PETAN (SLUMP)
GOOD JOB, LUMINOUS BEAST!
YOUR QUICK DETECTIVE WORK HELPED US FIND THE FOURTH RELIC FIRST...
THE FALLEN ANGEL DIDN'T SHOW UP AT THIS RELIC'S LOCATION...
.....
OINK!
...AND NAB IT BEFORE THEM!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

...FEELS TOO HALF-HEARTED.
IT JUST...

...WHICH LEAVES ONLY THE FIFTH RELIC SITE...
NOR DO I SENSE HIM NEAR NUMBER THREE.

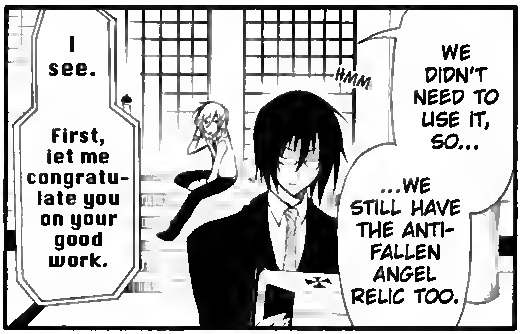
...THAT YOU'D EXPECT THEM TO...
THEY HAVE SO MUCH MORE FIRE-POWER...


I'M GONNA REPORT IN TO SIR PURE-BLOOD.
PI (BEEP)
PI
IT'S NOT GOOD TO WORRY TO THE POINT OF PARANOIA.
I NEEDN'T FRET SO MUCH...
...NO, NO. WE HAVE THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC, AFTER ALL.

GOSO (RSTL)
GOSO
WE'VE SECURED THE FOURTH RELIC.
HELLO, SIR PURE-BLOOD?
IT'S ME, NAO.

I'VE...
...GOT IT RIGHT NOW.
IT'S...A CANDLE-STICK, I THINK.

Let Hanamura hang on to the anti-fallen angel Relic.


I see.
First, let me congratu-late you on your good work.
HMM
WE DIDN'T NEED TO USE IT, SO...
...WE STILL HAVE THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC TOO.

Don't let Rrcana steal it.
You...
...keep the Fourth Relic.
ROGER, SIR PURE-BLOOD.

Yes...
...I must say...

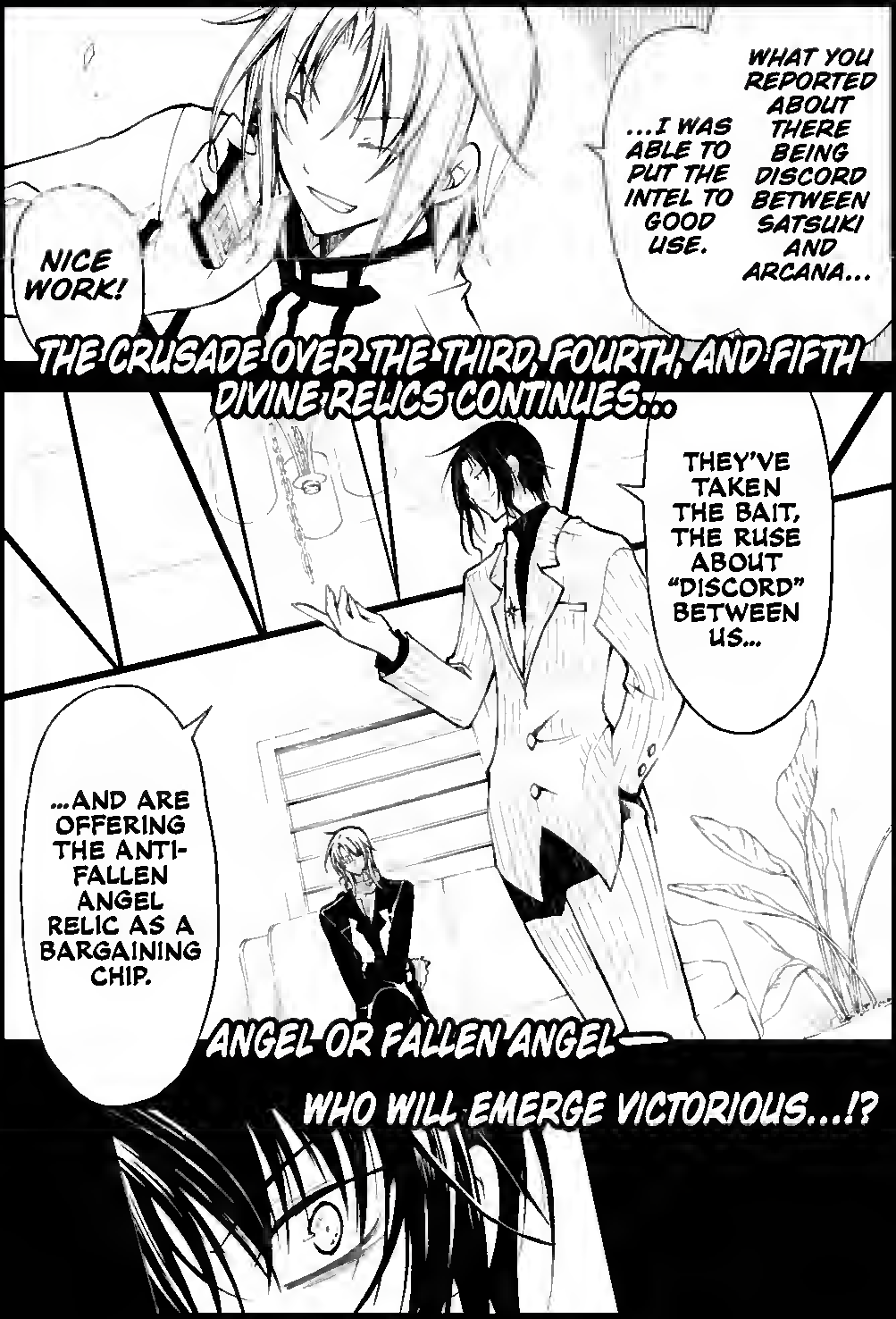
YOU DID WELL...
...NAO.
IN-DEED...
...it was well worth sending you over to Tsuzuki.

YOU DID WELL...
...NAO.

IN-DEED...
...it was well worth sending you over to Tsuzuki.

YOU DID WELL, NAO.
INDEED... IT WAS WELL WORTH SENDING YOU OVER TO TSUZUKI.
NAO IS SPYING FOR SATSUKI, THE FALLEN ANGEL...
I'LL DO MY BEST TO KEEP YOU HAPPY— THE BEST IS YET TO COME...
...BY INFILTRATING ANGEL TSUZUKI'S TEAM...!!
HEH...
... Sir Pure-blood.

...COULD THE SPY BE YOU?
THERE'S A TRAITOR AMONG US...?
ANGEL VS. FALLEN ANGEL—THE WILD PARTY BEGINS... WITHIN EVERYONE...
DAMN ARCANA ...!!
...THERE LIES DARKNESS AND THE ONGOING STRUGGLE AGAINST IT TO LIVE...
...A GOOD GUY?
OR AM I A BAD PERSON?
DO YOU THINK I'M...


WHAT YOU REPORTED ABOUT THERE BEING DISCORD BETWEEN SATSUKI AND ARCANA...
...I WAS ABLE TO PUT THE INTEL TO GOOD USE.
NICE WORK!
THE CRUSADE OVER THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH DIVINE RELICS CONTINUES...
THEY'VE TAKEN THE BAIT, THE RUSE ABOUT "DISCORD" BETWEEN US...
...AND ARE OFFERING THE ANTI-FALLEN ANGEL RELIC AS A BARGAINING CHIP.
ANGEL OR FALLEN ANGEL—
WHO WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS...!?

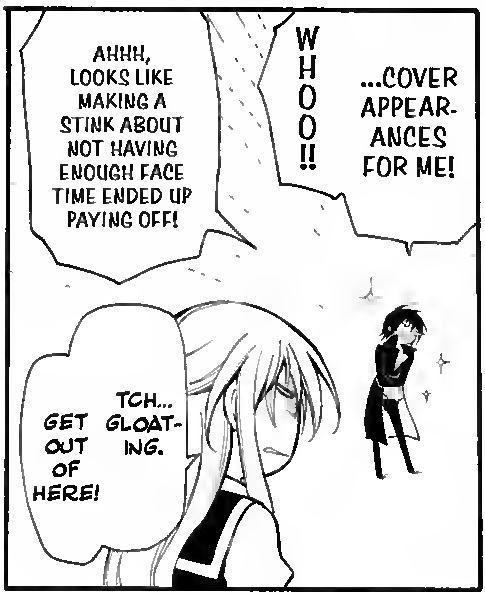
ARCANA'S STILL IN LEAGUE WITH SATSUKI!
THESE NEGO-TIATIONS ARE A TRAP!
A BLASPHEMOUS TOAST TO THE IMMORAL BLOODFEST—
...MY. MY. JUST WHAT...
...MIGHT YOU BE DOING HERE?

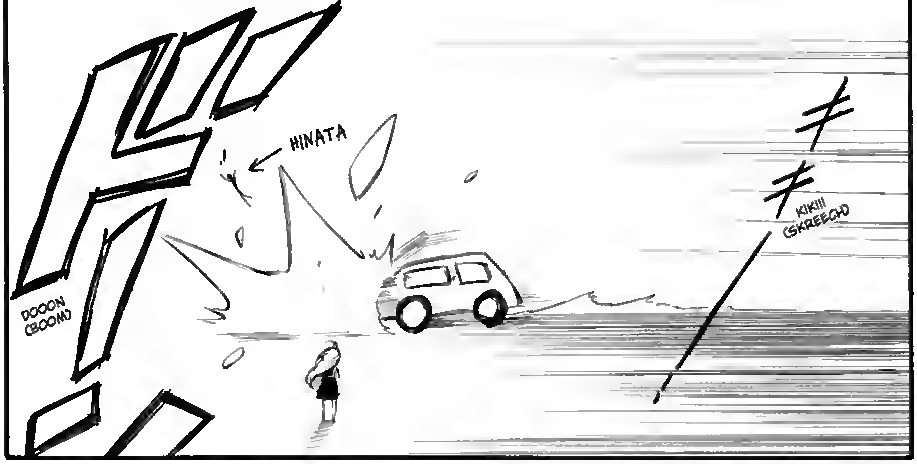
To be Continued in BLOODY CROSS Vol. 5!!

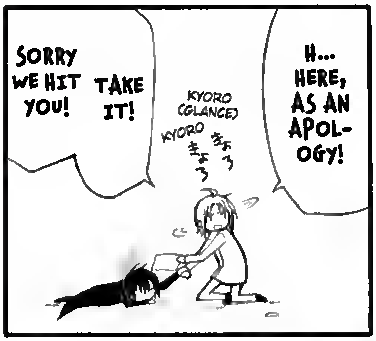
HELLO!
THIS IS VOLUME 4 OF BLOODY CROSS, THE MANGA WHERE IT'S BECOME CLEAR...
...THAT THERE ISN'T A SINGLE DECENT PERSON IN THE WORLD!
BLOODY CROSS 4

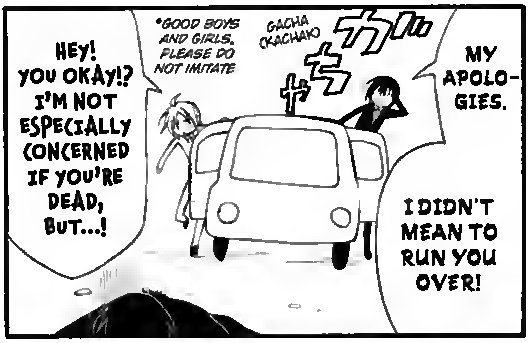
AFTERWORD SCRIBBLES

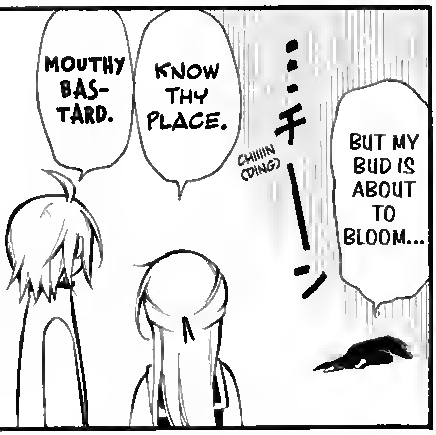
FOUR PAGES AGAIN THIS TIME!


AHHH, LOOKS LIKE MAKING A STINK ABOUT NOT HAVING ENOUGH FACE TIME ENDED UP PAYING OFF!
WHOO!!
...COVER APPEAR-ANCES FOR ME!
TCH... GLOAT-ING.
GET OUT OF HERE!


HINATA
DOOON (BOOM)
KIK!!! (SKREECH)

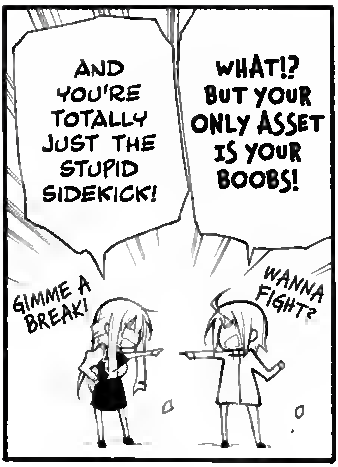

SORRY WE HIT YOU!
TAKE IT!
KYORO (GLANCE)
KYORO ぷう
H... HERE, AS AN APOL-OGY!

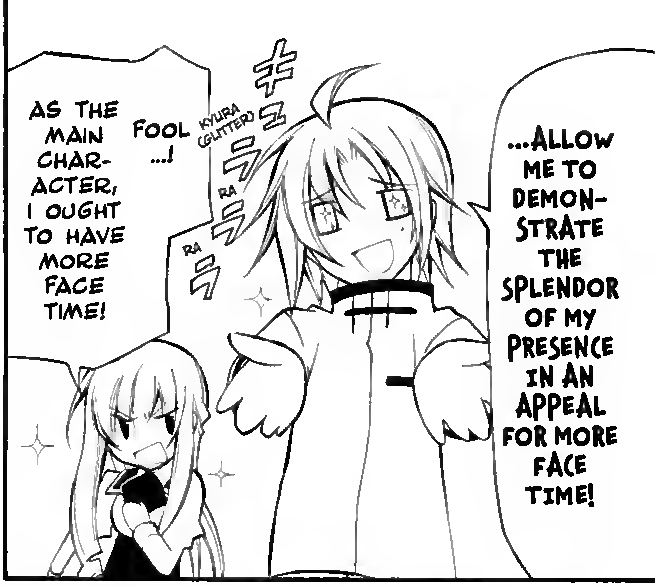

HEY! YOU OKAY!? I'M NOT ESPECIALLY CONCERNED IF YOU'RE DEAD, BUT...!
*GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS, PLEASE DO NOT IMITATE
GACHA (KACHAK)
MY APOLO-GIES.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO RUN YOU OVER!


MOUTHY BAS-TARD.
KNOW THY PLACE.
CHIIIIN (DING)
:::チーン
BUT MY BUD IS ABOUT TO BLOOM...

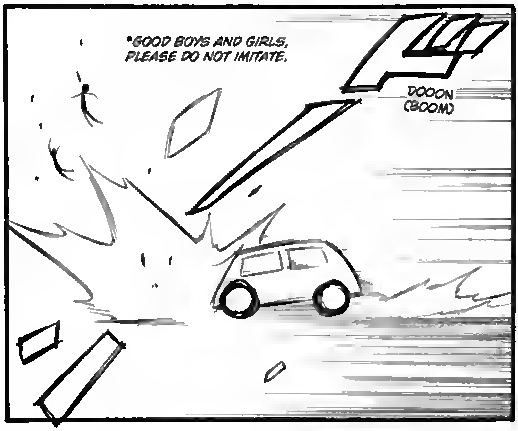
...NOW, THEN...
SINCE I'M HERE ANY-WAY...

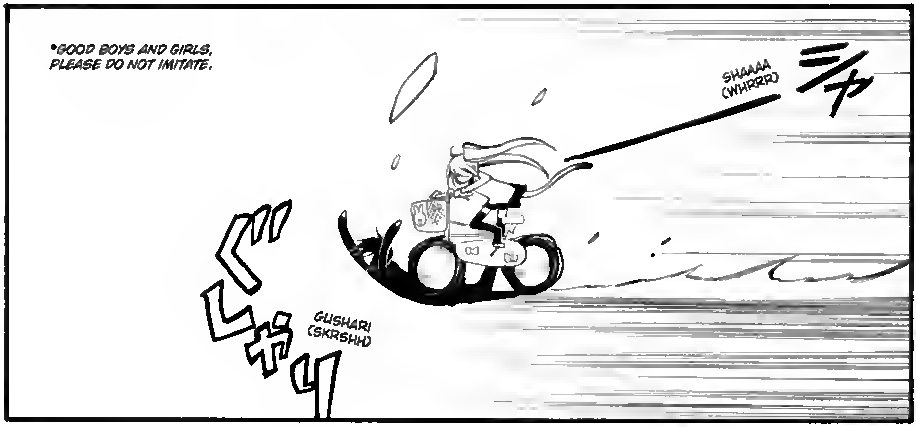
RANKED WORST, THAT IS, LEAST "LIKED" IN FAN LETTERS.
OF THE FOUR LEADS!
*THROUGH THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES.

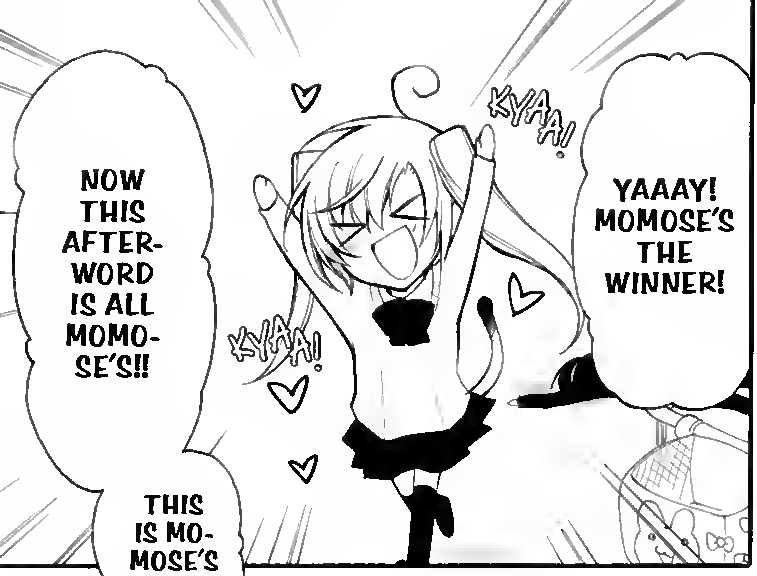

AND YOU'RE TOTALLY JUST THE STUPID SIDEKICK!
WHAT!? BUT YOUR ONLY ASSET IS YOUR BOOBS!
GIMME A BREAK!
WANNA FIGHT?

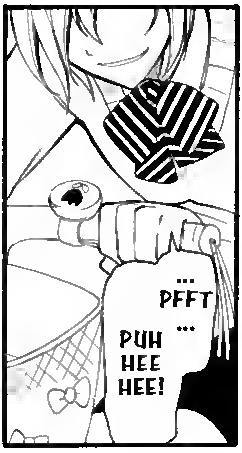

AS THE MAIN CHARACTER, I OUGHT TO HAVE MORE FACE TIME!
FOOL ...!
KYURA (GLITTER)
RA
RA
...ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE THE SPLENDOR OF MY PRESENCE IN AN APPEAL FOR MORE FACE TIME!

YOU BRATS WITH PLENTY OF SCENES CAN BEAT IT!
GACHA (KACHAK)


*GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS, PLEASE DO NOT IMITATE.
DOOON (BOOM)


*GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS, PLEASE DO NOT IMITATE.
SHAAAA (WHIRRR)
GUSHARI (SKRSHH)

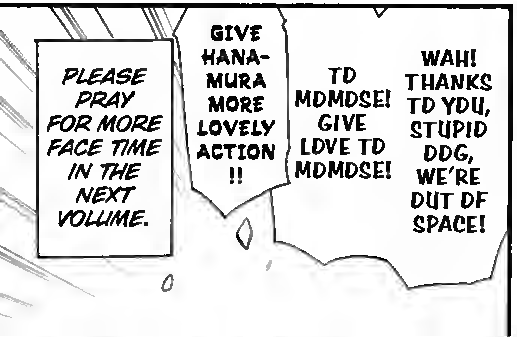

NOW THIS AFTER-WORD IS ALL MOMO-SE'S!!
KYAA!
KYAA!
YAAAY! MOMOSE'S THE WINNER!


... PFFT ...
PUH HEE HEE!

THIS IS MO-MOSE'S CHANCE!
PLEASE GIVE MDMOSE MDRE FACE TIME!
PLEASE GIVE MOMOSE MORE FACE TIME!
PLEASE GIVE MOMOSE MORE FACE TIME!
ZUMOMO (GLOOOM)
PLEASE GIVE MDMDSE MDRE FACE TIME!
PLEASE GIVE MDMDSE MDRE FACE TIME!
MOMO
PLEASE GIVE MOMDSE MORE FACE TIME!
PLEASE GIVE MDMDSE MDRE FACE TIME!

YOU GET LOST, LITTLE KITTEN!
SHAAA (HISSS)
STUPID, STUPID! GET LOST, DOG!

NO... PLEASE GIVE ME MORE FACE TIME! ME...!!
PLEASE GIVE—
YURAA (LOOM)


PLEASE PRAY FOR MORE FACE TIME IN THE NEXT VOLUME.
GIVE HANA-MURA MORE LOVELY ACTION !!
TO MDMDSE! GIVE LOVE TO MDMDSE!
WAH! THANKS TO YOU, STUPID DOG, WE'RE OUT OF SPACE!

BLOODY CROSS 4

Shiwo Komeyama

Translation: Mari Morimoto • Lettering: Abigail Blackman

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

BLOODY CROSS Vol. 4 ©2010 Shiwo Komeyama/SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. First published in Japan in 2010 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. English translation rights arranged with SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. and Hachette Book Group through Tuttle-Mori Agency, Inc., Tokyo.

Translation ©2014 by SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD.

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
Hachette Book Group
237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017

www.HachetteBookGroup.com
www.YenPress.com

Yen Press is an imprint of Hachette Book Group, Inc. The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

First Yen Press ebook Edition: September 2014

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-37988-5

App ISBN: 978-0-316-37989-2